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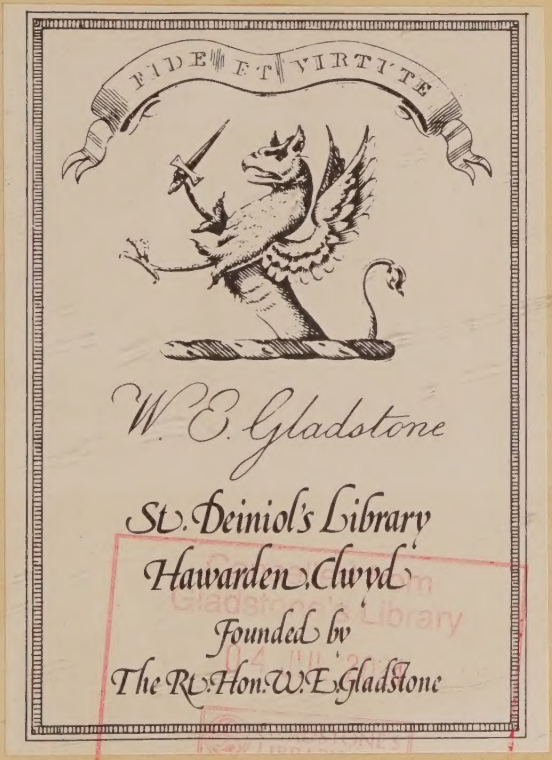

# TEXTUAL DISCOVERIES IN PROVERBS, PSALMS, AND ISAIAH

This essay was presented to the Faculté de Theologie Protestante and was recommended for the degree of Doctor of Theology in the University of Strasbourg.

CH. JAEGER
A. CAUSSE
E. EHRHARDT
} *Examinateurs.*

# TEXTUAL DISCOVERIES IN PROVERBS, PSALMS, AND ISAIAH

BY

MELVILLE SCOTT, D.D.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTORY

THERE are very many things that might be said by way of introduction to the study of Proverbs and Psalms which can find no place in this thesis. It has indeed nothing to do with these books as books, whether of religious philosophy or of religious devotion, but only deals with them as defective manuscripts, which, by hook or by crook, have to be restored to something like their original condition. This is a very limited aim, but the limitation is essential. Textual criticism has greatly suffered from its inclusion as one of the multifarious subjects which have to be dealt with in commentaries. The letter has suffered, because it has had to yield to the higher needs of the spirit. Nothing is here intended to be said in disparagement of the commentaries, indeed they are uniformly so excellent that there is little need to add to their number; nor have I either the time or the ability to compare myself with the great scholars of the past who have displayed the treasure of wisdom and spirituality contained in these two characteristic products of the Jewish Church. What is here dealt with will, it is hoped, find a place in future commentaries, but its inclusion must be left to others. The critical study of the text is far too exacting to be combined with more extensive aims, and these aims,

in their turn, almost preclude the serious study of textual problems.

The two topics simply cannot be combined, and have suffered from the attempt to combine them. To a commentator a corrupt passage comes as an unwelcome interruption of his exposition—he gives it more or less hurried consideration ; consults, it may be, what previous commentaries have suggested, and then turns to more congenial themes. Had he done otherwise, he would have over-weighted his pages with technical matters of very little interest to the ordinary reader or to the preacher in search of edification. It is with much regret that in these critical studies I must turn aside from the weightier matters of the law, and concentrate my attention upon the very details which others have rejected as comparatively unimportant. Not that they are really immaterial, for they possess a negative importance of very serious significance. A cut finger, a painful scratch, an aching tooth—things of little moment in themselves—constantly force themselves upon our unwilling attention, and divert us from our duties. Just in the same way, a succession of obscure, and sometimes wholly meaningless, passages, is a serious deterrent to the study of the Bible for spiritual purposes. These particular passages may be of no great value in themselves, but they become an irritating interruption, and tend to depreciate the value of the book in which they occur. This was particularly the case with the Book of Hosea, which was perhaps less read and less understood than any other prophecy. I have dealt with that book elsewhere,[1] and need not give it further mention, save to say that its spiritual value is enormously increased by the critical handling of its highly corrupt text.

In turning from Hosea to the Books of Proverbs and Psalms, it will be observed that no three books could be more different from each other. Each of them represents a different activity of the religious

[1] *The Message of Hosea*, 1921.

consciousness. Prophecy is the direct reception of truth from above; wisdom, the experience of a pious man reflecting upon the manifold events of human life; sacred poetry, the response of the heart to the inward promptings of grace. Critically considered, this difference of outlook matters nothing at all. They are just three books, all more or less defective, and all presenting much the same textual errors, and all to be remedied, it is to be hoped, by the same critical methods.

These methods must now receive careful attention. Their value will be estimated by the view taken of the numerous emendations given, and by the consideration of the evidence for each emendation, and of the particular arguments advanced in its behalf. All that is attempted in this introduction is to remove any *à priori* assumptions which might prejudice the reader against them as being due to merely Conjectural Emendation. It will probably be objected that when an ancient text has once been allowed to get into confusion, all subsequent attempts to remedy this confusion must necessarily be futile, and must so partake of the nature of guess-work, that no reliance can be placed upon them. A much respected scholar, Dr. Kirkpatrick, goes so far as to say that "It is absurd to suppose that, in more than a few instances, the original text can with certainty be restored by conjecture." If this be the verdict of scholarship no pains must be spared to set forth the precise nature of conjectural emendation, and to state the principles which govern its profitable employment. In order to show the admissibility of this method in a convincing way it will be convenient to apply it to a familiar passage of Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, Act II. Sc. 1:

> The jury passing on the prisoner's life,
> May, in the sworn twelve, have a thief or two,
> Guiltier than him they try. What's open made to justice,
> That justice seizes. What know the laws,

That thieves do pass on thieves? 'Tis very pregnant,
The jewel that we find we stoop and take it,
Because we see it; but what we do not see,
We tread upon, and never think of it.

The cursory reader will probably feel that this speech lacks clarity, and let it go at that. The literary critic will perhaps suggest that the passage was not written by Shakespeare at all, and will evolve a theory of extensive interpolations. The textual critic will set himself to see what is wrong, and how he can best put it right. He will make the following observations:

(1) The fourth line is two syllables too short, and is heavy and dull:

That justice seizes. What know the laws.

(2) The third line is three syllables too long: a fact of very great significance being that one line should be in excess, and the very next line in defect. Some editors write "to justice" with the next line, but this only makes that line more impossible.

(3) Something much more serious—there is an expression "passing on" which is used twice over, but with an entirely different sense on each occasion, for "passing on," in line 1, has the technical sense of "sitting in judgment upon":

The jury passing on the prisoner's life.

But in line 5 it means "passing laws or enactments":

The laws,
That thieves do pass on thieves.

(4) The phrase "'Tis very pregnant" (*i.e.* evident) is not needed.

These are cumulative signs of corruption. If a single emendation can remove all these difficulties, it will possess a cumulative proof of its accuracy. What is wrong is a misplacement of certain lines, a misplacement due to the very natural supposition that the last half of line 4 forms one sentence with the first part of

line 5. The lines must be put back into their original position—when all difficulty is at an end.

> The jury passing on the prisoner's life,
> May in the sworn twelve have a thief or two,
> Guiltier than him they try—What know the laws ?
> That thieves do pass on thieves 'tis very pregnant.
> What's open made to justice (that) [1] justice seizes.
> The jewel that we find we stoop and take it,
> Because we see it ; but what we do not see,
> We tread upon, and never think of it.

This emendation may indeed be termed conjectural, on the ground that it lacks the support of any manuscript, and yet there is very little of conjecture about it, since it depends upon the accurate observation of details previously overlooked, and upon a process of careful inference made possible by this observation. A single alteration at one and the same time improves the halting prosody, allows the term " passing on " to bear the same meaning in both the lines in which it occurs, and makes the whole passage clear and consecutive. That a single alteration should serve so many ends is proof positive that it must have been the original reading, and yet it is wholly without MS. support.

Those who make this objection are seemingly ignorant of the possibilities of human error, and that a mistake may have been made in copying from the very autograph, and may thus be antecedent to any and every manuscript. A startling instance of this eventuality is found in a leading article of *The Times* (April 10, 1924), and yet how many of the readers of that article noticed the error, and how many of these found the remedy ?

The sentence is as follows :

> In the grotesque and illogical confusion of Europe the economics of a year ago were subtly inflicting politics and political conceptions have broken in with perpetual distraction upon a calm sense of economic values.

[1] That should probably be dropped, as having been added to help out the scansion.

Only a very careless reader, but most readers are very careless, could have failed to observe that something must be wrong with this sentence. My first impression was that the printer must have misplaced a line, but since all the neighbouring sentences seemed to give a satisfactory sense, this idea had to be given up, and the error sought in the sentence itself. Two persons have to bear the blame, the writer of the article and the compositor, and they must be left to fight it out between them. Either the writer's penmanship or the compositor's perspicacity was at fault; perhaps the blame may be equally divided. What was written was *infecting*, what was printed was *inflicting*. This simple suggestion restores the sentence to intelligibility, and yet it is an instance of conjectural emendation.

The absence of MSS. evidence is by no means a fatal objection, for there are many kinds of evidence. To forbid the employment of conjectural emendation as a process of criticism is much the same as forbidding the use of circumstantial evidence in the assize court. Conjectural criticism rests upon circumstantial evidence, and the validity of this evidence depends upon its quality and quantity. Where there is no such evidence the strictures of Dr. Kirkpatrick are thoroughly deserved; and it may be freely admitted that very many of the emendations suggested by critical experts have fallen far short of probability; but when there is real evidence, and more especially when this evidence is cumulative, we are as much bound to follow it in matters of criticism, as we are bound to follow reason in all other matters which do not admit of ocular demonstration. Conjectural criticism is, in fact, the interpretation of such evidence as is available, in default of evidence of a more direct character. Bishop Butler very justly remarks that "probable proofs, by being added, not only increase evidence, but multiply it." This truth is capable of mathematical verification. There is, however, a yet more cogent kind of evidence when the separate probabilities move, if we may so

say, in different spheres, some of them being graphical, and others literary and spiritual. In such cases it is possible to gain moral certainty.

Special attention must now be directed to the various reasons which render it absolutely necessary to resort to conjectural emendation in the restoration of the Hebrew text.

It must in the first place be allowed by all that the late date of the Masoretic recension, coupled with the unsatisfactory character of the early versions, greatly diminishes the value of both these authorities. But even if these authorities were far more trustworthy than they unfortunately are, this might narrow, but it would by no means do away with, the necessity of a resort to conjecture.

The very startling fact must never be forgotten that no Hebrew text could be made intelligible, even in the very earliest days, without the ubiquitous employment of conjecture. Since the consonants were written without vowels, and their division into word-groups had also to be left to the reader, neither vocalisation, nor the correct reading of the sentence, could be carried out without a very considerable measure of conjecture.

Those who insist, as some still do, upon the verbal inspiration of the Masoretic text (M.T.), that is the "traditional" Hebrew text, as fixed and handed down by the late Jewish scribes, are in reality claiming divine authority for a conjectural interpretation of a text originally written only in consonants. The scribes and the readers in the Synagogue were chosen because of their supposed ability in conjecture, and without some such ability would not have been able to read a single passage. Thus it is futile to suppose that conjectural criticism can be avoided, for it has been present from the very first.

Now since, as may very well be supposed, the scribes and copyists may have sometimes been wrong in their interpretations, the text, as transmitted by them, must

be subjected in many passages to conjectural emendation. If this were not allowed we should be saddled with "the desolations of many generations," and the Old Testament would be frequently unintelligible, as indeed it in a measure still is. Scribes were doubtless of very different capacities, and some were capable, and others very much the reverse. The Masoretic Edition includes a very considerable amount of frankly conjectural work; that which is "read" being often distinguished from that which, though "written" (*i.e.* found in the MSS.), was nevertheless not read at all. Can it be supposed that the scribes responsible for the Masoretic recension of the eighth century, or thereabouts, of the present era, were in any degree infallible? The study of the ancient versions reveals the fact that these versions frequently present readings which are at once more ancient and more probable than those accepted by the mediæval scribes. This may, in many instances, be due to the possession of earlier and better MSS., but sometimes it is certainly due to better conjecture. As a matter of fact the Masoretic text rests on inferior MSS. to those underlying the versions, but upon more capable conjecture. Thus those who assert the superiority of the Masoretic text are, in plain fact, asserting the superiority of conjecture over MS. authority.

What is needed is not the rejection of conjectural emendation, but that it should be made really scientific. It cannot be denied that hitherto there has been far too much mere guess-work, and far too little consideration bestowed upon the conditions necessary for success. The painful drudgery involved in the collation of MSS. is hardly needed; for this work has already been done, with vastly little result. Another kind of labour is required, the labour of interpreting the evidence. The wonderful skill shown by the answers to the acrostics so frequently appearing in our newspapers shows what can be done by conjecture. The textual critic is called upon to manifest the same kind of ability in a nobler cause.

There is, however, something yet more essential. The art of making emendations must become a philosophy, and must be placed upon a sound scientific basis.

This basis must now be explored. It rests upon the assumption that the corruption present in the Hebrew text is due to certain peculiarities inherent in the Hebrew script, peculiarities which rendered such corruption almost inevitable; and that, these peculiarities being recognised, it becomes possible to remedy this corruption. This is of course, as yet, merely an assumption, but it will cease to be an assumption, just in so far as it overcomes the difficulties of successive passages.

A cursory inspection of the Hebrew alphabet, even by one who is himself ignorant of Hebrew, is enough to show that this theory is at any rate possible. The fact that the modern printer, with all the advantage given him by stereotyped characters, makes the same blunders as his less fortunate predecessors, confirms this theory. There is, however, a yet more conclusive proof. If this theory not only accounts for the present condition of the text, but, in passage after passage, enables the critic to effect restorations otherwise impossible, the cumulative evidence in its favour becomes strong in proportion to the quality and quantity of these restorations. It may perhaps be objected that there is here a *circulus in probando*, that you make emendations by means of a theory, and then you use your emendations in order to establish your theory. Yes, but does not all science do the same? Every hypothesis depends for its validity upon its success in dealing with a large number of facts, even more than it depends upon the reasons which originally led to its adoption. Each apparent success gained is a fresh proof that the theory is correct. It is by such trial that a theory becomes scientific. Only a right theory will produce, and go on producing, right results; and if the results be right, there is not much amiss with the theory.

Now the Hebrew alphabet contains many pairs of

consonants which are obviously alike, *e.g.* ד (*d*) and ר (*r*), ב (*b*) and כ (*k*), ה (*h*) and ח (*ḥ*).

It would have been nothing less than a miracle if such resemblances had not occasioned mistakes, and many of the variations between the versions and the M.T. are undoubtedly due to this cause. But there are other letters which experience shows to be almost equally liable to confusion, notably מ (*m*) and פ (*p*), ר (*r*) and ו (*w*), and in some cases כ (*k*) and ס (*ṣ*). The detection of these offenders has made it possible to restore several passages hitherto regarded as incapable of rectification (*cf.* note on Prov. xxiv. 23). Thus the scope of emendation is considerably enlarged, and the risk of error is not materially increased. It is, indeed, greatly diminished, if the salutary rule is conscientiously adhered to, that no emendation, however otherwise inviting, should be accepted unless it can be recommended by its graphical probability. There are, of course, occasional instances of confusion between other letters, but the pairs mentioned above are the habitual offenders; and in dealing with a corrupt word in which any one of these letters is present, recourse should always be had to the simple process of the substitution of the letter commonly confused with it.

There is nothing new in what has been advanced up to this point, except the contention that a wider use should be made of this method, and that no emendation should be accepted unless it can be shown to be in accordance with its somewhat drastic conditions.

There is, however, more in the methodical use of this expedient than may appear at first sight. The tendency of previous scholars has been to deal with words, and when a word apparently corrupt is encountered, to seek for some other word which may seem to suit better with the general sense. It will be found in the emendations suggested in the following chapters, that the unit is not the word but the letter. There is no search made for a word presumably suited to the context; there is merely the testing of the

particular letters of the word supposed to be corrupt, and the substitution for one or even more than one of them, of the letter or letters with which they are most frequently confounded. Thus the emendation rather reveals itself than is actually sought for.

A notable instance of such a sudden revelation is found in Isaiah iv. 5: "The Lord will create upon Mount Sion . . . a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory *shall be* a defence."

The word "defence" is clearly corrupt, but it would be very difficult to suggest an alternative. No suggestion is attempted, attention is confined to the letters. The substitution of a ט for a ם gives the true emendation—and the sentence now gives up its very delightful secret:

*Yea above all the glory of the Sun.*

The next source of error to be exploited is the wrong division of the consonants into word-groups. Such emendations may, indeed, be regarded as conjectural, and condemned as such, but quite wrongly, for the original division by the ancient scribes was as much due to conjecture as is the redivision of the consonants by a modern critic. In fact the modern critic is more likely to be correct than his primitive predecessor, since the latter lacked the invaluable assistance of a dictionary. If, therefore, he happened to come across a word with which he was not acquainted, he had no possible hope of success otherwise than by guessing—with the chances greatly against him. This was conjectural criticism with a vengeance! The modern scholar has by his side a complete concordance of all the words used in the Old Testament, from one end of it to the other, and his chances of success are indefinitely increased.

The plan adopted by the ancient scribe can be inferred from his errors. He proceeded on the highly scientific principle of passing from the simple to the complex, and from the little words to the bigger words,

and it is hard to see how he could have done anything else. Yet at times his principle gave him away, for what he thought were the little words were in fact syllables of the larger words, and thus a whole sentence often got itself divided wrongly. Redivision should be attempted before any passage is condemned as hopelessly corrupt. The consonants of such a passage should be written in a row, and should be divided in every possible way, not forgetting to include the consonants ending and beginning the two adjacent verses or lines, for it may happen that the division into verses or lines has been incorrectly made. These kind of errors are not very common, but a striking instance will be found in Prov. xiii. 15.

The scribes were very human, and make the kind of mistakes common to all of us. They misplace lines, and, should it ever happen that two nearly adjacent lines end with the same word, what follows that word in one place is very likely to have been appended to the same word in the other place, where it does not properly belong. Still more frequent is the error of confounding two adjacent words, which happen to possess a superficial similarity, thus making them identical, to the no small obscuration of the sense. Many instances of this mistake will fall to be discussed, and it may be that others yet remain undetected. All these errors are incidental to copyists, and must be distinguished from the errors which are peculiar to the copyists of Hebrew books, and are in a measure almost necessitated by the unfortunate similarities obtaining between particular consonants in that most unscientific of all alphabets.

Up to this point little has been advanced which is wholly new to criticism, and all that has been done is to draw attention to what is generally acknowledged in principle, though often very insufficiently looked for in practice. This cannot be said of the special source of error now to be considered.

The Hebrew scribe was profoundly distrustful of

his predecessors, and was always ready to suppose that some one had blundered, and that it was incumbent upon him to rectify the carelessness of the past. He was very ready to suppose, what, indeed, did occasionally happen, that some previous scribe had inadvertently altered the order of the three consonants which go to form a Hebrew root, and that he himself was called upon to put these consonants back into what he presumed to have been their original order.

It must not be supposed from this that the Hebrew scribes had a double dose of original sin, or of inherited stupidity. Indeed they did their work under a high sense of responsibility. They would never, so far as I am aware, change one consonant into another consonant; nor would they allow themselves either to insert or to omit any consonant appearing in the text, with the significant exception of the consonants *aleph* and *vav*. They were ready either to insert or to omit these particular consonants, because the one was a silent letter and the other often a vowel, and also often written defectively, merely appearing as a dot, and in the ancient MSS. sometimes not appearing at all. These two exceptions do in fact confirm their general rule of scrupulous adhesion to the text.

In spite, however, of their good intentions, this particular device of altering the supposed disorder of the consonants has been disastrous; and the scribes using it have wrought far more confusion than they have remedied.

An early scribe has come to a verse of which he can make nothing at all, and he presumes the presence of corruption. Quite probably there was no error at all, and his own perspicacity was at fault. There may, however, have been an error, either in the actual text, or, which is quite as likely, in his reading of the consonants—for very possibly one of the consonants has been confused with what may be termed its double. If such were the case, it is many chances to one that he will diagnose the symptoms wrongly, and will apply

what he regarded as an infallible recipe—mutation of the order of the consonants; and then the harm will have been done, and once done will have remained undetected ever since. The first occasion upon which I observed this error was in dealing with Hosea xi. 7, when, by a happy chance, the dictionary fell open, and gave me, from Job xvi. 10, the very word which not only solved this particular difficulty, but revealed this scribal idiosyncracy. Passage after passage has yielded its secret through the use of this key, and the proof of the key is the fact that it opens so many locks, and is in fact the master key of criticism. For a special instance, compare the note on Prov. xviii. 19, as the most vivid example of this process.

The method of the modern critic is to undo the work of the scribe, and *to put the consonants back again into their original order*. This is not so very difficult. There are but three consonants in the normal Hebrew root, and, by mathematics, it is clear that they can stand in no more and no less than six different orders. Of these, one is the order in which they are now standing, which is presumably wrong. Hence there are five possible orders, and a reference to the dictionary will speedily decide how many of these represent actual words. Thus the area of possible conjecture is narrowed down to one or two words at the most, and, if the right track has been followed, the missing word has been discovered.

Suppose it, however, to be objected: "How do you know that this word is the emendation needed?" the answer is as follows. First of all, because the word is suitable, for if it be unsuitable it must of course be at once rejected; and in the second place, because this suitability was not at all the reason for fixing upon the choice of the word, but is of the nature of an undesigned coincidence.

Now, when, as in many instances, this suitability is so pronounced that no better word could be selected, even if it were allowable to search through the length

and breadth of the resources of the language, the selection of the word cannot fairly be said to depend upon conjectural emendation at all, since the field of conjecture has been so severely restricted, and since, of all possible words, that only has been singled out which fulfils the most drastic tests, first in respect of its component letters, and secondly in respect of its appropriateness to the context. The emendation "ghosts" proposed for the quite meaningless "words" in Prov. xix. 7, is an emendation for which it is possible to claim absolute certainty. Who could have anticipated that the change of a *mem* into a *pe*, a confusion of which there are many undoubted instances, coupled with the mutation of the order of the consonants, should present a reading so startling in its appropriateness to a very exacting context? An emendation such as this would have possessed undoubted claims, had it been the happy suggestion of a Bentley or a Porson, but it was not anybody's suggestion; it suggested itself. If an emendation, so arrived at, can better all the suggestions of all the critics, it possesses, in default of any external evidence from manuscripts and versions, the highest possible credentials. Fidelity to spiritual experience, beauty, and originality are hardly likely to emerge as the by-products of a mechanical process; but when they are found by such means, they are not only acceptable in themselves, but they afford a solid proof that the process adopted is justified by its results.

Conjectural emendation varies in value according to the level of probability in each particular instance. It is, of course, capable of being misused, but misuse may be guarded against by strict adherence to the rule that no emendation ought ever to be accepted which does not account for the faulty condition of the text. Only such emendations deserve adoption as are capable of affording a reason for the emergence of the error. It is not sufficient to accept an emendation, merely because it gives a good sense. Many emendations might do this, and yet be quite inadmissible. Every

emendation, if it is to stand as the actual word of the author, must account for its disappearance from the original text, and must, moreover, explain the misunderstanding owing to which the present occupant gained wrongful possession. There is such a thing as a philosophy of error, an inferential process, in which every step leads further from the truth. A sound emendation must be of such a nature as to reveal the starting place at which this process commenced. A striking instance of the genesis and subsequent development of error is found in Prov. vii. 22: "As a fool to the correction of the stocks, until a dart strike through his liver." The initial mistake was the confusion of the original word "stag," vouched for by the LXX, with the very similar Hebrew word for "a fool." This mistake suggested others: "unto correction" took the place once occupied by "sheaves of corn," and finally "the stocks" emerged as the fool's proper punishment. This chain of inferences, initiated by "the fool," was replaced by another chain of inferences initiated by "the stag"; *and every word needed for the new sentence closely resembled a word in the corrupted sentence.* Not only so, but the new sentence fitted on to the second line "until a dart strike through his liver," a penalty very appropriate for the stag, but somewhat excessive for the fool, already sufficiently maltreated in "the stocks." This instance is one of great importance, as showing that the presence or absence of versional support is almost immaterial. "The stag" has this support, and is in fact a thousand years anterior to "the fool." But supposing this support had been absent, the strange coincidence between the sentence as emended and the same sentence in its corrupt form would still remain. Besides, the LXX might conceivably have been in error when it read the word "stag," but it is impossible not to be convinced by the textual argument, since it shows to a demonstration how the false arose out of the true, and how the true has arisen from the false. And yet

had versional support been lacking, the emendation would have been regarded as an instance of merely conjectural emendation! What of that? The corruption itself was an instance of conjecture—of conjectural aberration!

It may confidently be affirmed that no book in the Bible affords so favourable a test for making a correct decision upon the merits or demerits of conjectural emendation as does the Book of Proverbs. It is true that emendation is made more difficult by the absence of context, each proverb being complete in itself. So much the better! But when an emendation is made, it has to pass no ordinary test. It must not merely make sense, it must satisfy the well-known definition of a proverb as containing "the wisdom of many, and the wit of one." The proverb as emended must be epigrammatic, terse, forcible, and convincing. A corrupt proverb is always "stale, flat, and unprofitable." If a proverb as emended becomes sharp and poignant, the emendation has evidence in its favour exactly proportioned to its superiority in meaning to that proverb as it stands in the transmitted text. That an emended proverb should really *bite* is no small proof of the accuracy of the emendation. How much more must this be the case, when this emendation was not arrived at by any consideration of suitability, but by the very prosaic methods detailed in the present introduction.

Something must now be said with regard to the second part of the present volume, the recension of the text of the Psalms. The inversion of the natural order of the two books is due to the fact that the studies in Proverbs were undertaken first, but it has proved of great advantage. It is very questionable whether it would have been at all possible to have coped with the very serious difficulties presented by the Psalms, without previous experience gained in another and less arduous field. The method of conjectural criticism had to be evolved, and so far as possible perfected, before it

could be applied to the special difficulties of this yet more important book.

Indeed for some considerable time I was inclined to doubt whether the method would meet with much success. The conditions of transmission seemed likely to have been so very dissimilar that it could hardly be expected that both books would yield to the same treatment. The Book of Proverbs, as written for the private individual, would probably have been transmitted by comparatively few manuscripts; there would have been few attempts at emendation, and corrupt passages would for the most part have been left untampered with. It would, as it seemed, be quite otherwise with errors occurring in the Psalms. These errors would have to be dealt with, whether for better or for worse, for the reason that every variation would mean a hitch in the public services. Thus the text of the Psalms might very well have been so mishandled that textual reconstruction would have been for ever impossible.

This anticipation has been in some degree justified. Many changes were undoubtedly made. Sometimes psalms, originally separate, were combined, at other times a psalm was ruthlessly divided. Psalms are occasionally made up of a mosaic of ancient fragments; and a later editor would sometimes make what he would regard as suitable additions, or would even modify, as at the close of the fifty-first Psalm, any doctrine which he thought subversive of orthodoxy, even though what he added might be alien to the spirit of the original psalm.

Such alterations might have made restoration quite impossible. That the thing really happened to some extent is proved to a demonstration by a comparison between Psalm xxxi. 3, and the same passage as found in Psalm lxxi. 3. Here the misplacing of a single letter gave rise to a series of emendations the progress of which can still be clearly traced. The scribe who made these alterations was peculiarly unfortunate in his

efforts, and the passage as emended is unintelligible. Fortunately the original text remained untouched in the earlier psalm; otherwise restoration would have been very precarious, if not impossible. Had this kind of thing occurred at all frequently, the restoration of the Psalms would have been utterly hopeless. Happily, however, the hand of the would-be restorer was somehow stayed. Another factor came in to neutralise the tendency to indiscriminate alteration—the factor of reverence. The influence of this emotion upon the transmission of the text of the Old Testament is profound. Reverence is, of its very nature, conservative—conservative alike of truth and of error. In the case of the Hebrew text of the Psalms it has been conservative of error, and thus ultimately of truth, since it has guarded the text from premature and, therefore, destructive attempts at revision. Doubtless this tendency was fostered by the use of the psalms in public worship. The ordinary congregation is intolerant even of improvements, as the Revisers of the Prayer Book Psalter found to their cost; and to this tendency we probably owe it that the mistakes in the text have been transmitted with a quite wonderful fidelity.

There was indeed a period, very early in the history of the text, when this reverence had not begun to operate. Not that men were irreverent, but because they were near to the inspired writers. Only when the flames are dying down does literary reverence take to collecting the scattered embers. A critical and literary age inevitably succeeds to an age of inspiration, but there is sure to be an interval, and it is then that the harm is done. A modern school of critics is endeavouring to explore the *terra incognita* between the penned and the printed works of Shakespeare, and a similar exploration must be attempted of the *terra incognita* that lies between the traditional and the original texts of the Psalms.

All that is needed has been already done towards fixing the traditional text of the Psalms—Dr. Gins-

burg's monumental edition contains the last word of such criticism. Is, then, the work of textual criticism finished? No, it is hardly begun! There is a very wide gap between the traditional text and the original text, and it is the object of conjectural criticism to pass across the gulf. Can it do this? This is not an abstract question: it cannot either be asserted or denied *à priori*. The possibility of emendation depends upon the nature of the particular emendations suggested. The proof of the pudding lies in the eating of the pudding.

What is here attempted is to show that the mistakes in the text of the Psalms are of the same general character as those already detected in the Proverbs, and that they can be remedied by the application of the same method. There is no need to say anything more than has been already said with regard to this method. The studies on the Proverbs form the antecedent preparation for the studies on the Psalms, and if it should appear that the same method applies to both books, it may be regarded as confirmed by no ordinary measure of proof; and it is hoped and believed that the particular emendations proposed will receive very serious attention on the part of the whole Church, and indeed on the part of all who value these two very wonderful books throughout the world.

Gradually, however, this modest hope has given place to something far more ambitious. Since it has appeared that one and the same method has been employed upon two very distinctive books, it seems reasonable to suppose that this method may be of a very much wider application, and that it is in itself far more important than the particular emendations obtained by its means. It may solve the whole problem of the Old Testament text, and give the world a Bible understanded of the people. Surely this is a worthy aim, and one which should be acclaimed with enthusiasm. It has, nevertheless, to contend against no little opposition.

There may be some who will argue that the employment of such a method as is here advocated will import a human element into an inspired text. This is wholly to misconceive the object of scholarship, this object being the removal of a human element already present in the text. Supposing the existence of such an element, it is evident that its presence in the text must tend to the depreciation of inspiration by the inclusion of so much that is not inspired at all—the futilities and blunders of many generations being ascribed to the original authors, and even to the Divine Superintendent of their labours. Thus the restoration of the true text must inevitably result in a higher appreciation of the Divine Element.

Another objection is less easily answered. It may be said that it is hardly possible that a book studied and restudied by innumerable scholars of the highest reputation, and of the most extensive learning, should present any opportunity for reconstruction; and that so many skilled eyes having been searching for so many centuries, there can be nothing still left to be discovered. The answer to this very reasonable objection is that a man only finds what he is looking for, and only when he is looking for it in the right way. The assumption of the accuracy of the Masoretic text has greatly hindered the discovery of manifold errors in transmission. The belief in verbal inspiration may have been greatly modified, but the harm has been done. Modern criticism has been chiefly occupied in gaining new views of the Old Testament as a whole, and very little attention has been paid to textual methods. This criticism has in fact fallen between two stools. Those who valued their Bibles the most highly, championed the authority of the traditional text through thick and thin. These scholars did not find because they did not think it right to look. Other scholars in more recent times have presumed that the text has no authority at all, and that it may be emended indiscriminately. Such scholars had no method in

their search, and so were little likely to succeed. Thus the failure to achieve results is due to the fact that some have not found because they did not look, and that others have not found because they were not looking in the right way.

The attainment of a right method is no easy task, and demands from the textual critic a drastic limitation of aim. He cannot spare time for the exposition of the text, nor for the consideration of the many interesting problems dealt with by the higher criticism. Always and everywhere he must fish in troubled waters, shutting his eyes to the fair beauty of the stream, and to the allurements of the surrounding scenery. He is a student, not of the spirit, but of the letter; and yet his one object is to liberate the spirit from the imperfection of the letter, and so to cleanse the well of truth that the water of life may be drunk pure and undefiled by the mud and dust of centuries. Yet has this labour so tedious and so minute, its moments of ecstasy. To have found that which was lost must ever be a joy, whether it be a lost sheep, or a lost coin, but how much more when it is a lost thought—a thought hidden for hundreds or even thousands of years, but now at length liberated to resume its interrupted mission of instruction!

In asking others to accompany me upon my journey I believe that it will not be found uninviting. The labour involved will be of the slightest. There is little that is abstruse in the arguments relied upon. Any careful reader is competent to decide upon the alleged resemblance between particular letters, having the letters themselves before him. What will probably appear to him to be remarkable is the extreme simplicity of the methods employed, as compared with the surprising results obtained by their use. Quite apart from the value, spiritual and intellectual, of these results, the seeking is as full of interest as the finding. Every corrupt passage presents a problem which has hitherto defied solution. First comes the hunt for clues, and it

is quite wonderful how rarely the true reading fails to have left some indication behind it; or, which is to say the same thing in other words, how rarely the culprit has succeeded in covering his tracks. Then the pursuit begins, and the story of detection, so much easier to narrate than to discover, is unfolded. I shall be much surprised if others fail to find a stimulating interest in these records of the chase. Indeed, I have frequently dealt with very many of the passages both of the Proverbs and Psalms in the weekly discourse, and have even lectured upon the whole subject to quite simple and unlettered audiences, and have found, much to my surprise, that they watched the process with absorbed interest. Hence I have in the present volume attempted to give my arguments in greater fulness than would have been at all necessary, had the expert alone been chiefly to be considered. To steer between the Scylla of too much and the Charybdis of too little explanation has not always been very easy—but I have tended to hug the rock rather than to court the whirlpool.

To the original studies in Proverbs and Psalms some have been added dealing with Isaiah on similar lines.

One word more. My title is designedly provocative. It is high time that the battle should be fought to an issue between a revised and an unrevised text. If "discoveries" have been made, whether by myself or by others, they should be accepted. Some of mine have, so Prof. Margoliouth tells me, been anticipated. So much the better—*beati qui nostra ante nos dixerunt!* What I try to prove is that a true method will produce discoveries, simply because it is the exact opposite of the way by which the mistakes were introduced.

# PART I

## PROVERBS

The reader who is unfamiliar with the Hebrew alphabet is advised to refer frequently to it as printed below:

| | |
|---|---|
| א 'Ālĕph | a smooth breathing |
| ב Bēth | *b* or *bh* |
| ג Gīmĕl | *g* or *gh* |
| ד Dālĕth | *d* or *dh* (as in " the ") |
| ה Hē | *h* |
| ו Vav (waw) | *w* (Latin *v*) |
| ז Zăyĭn | *z* |
| ח Kēth, Khēth | *ch* (as in " loch ") |
| ט Ṭeth | *t* |
| י Yōdh | *y* (consonantal) |
| כ Caph, Kaph (ך at end of word) | *k* or *kh* |
| ל Lāmĕdh | *l* |
| מ (ם at end of word) Mēm | *m* |
| נ (ן at end of word) Nun | *n* |
| ס Sa̤mech | *s* |
| ע 'Ayĭn | a rough breathing |
| פ (ף at end of word) Pē | *p* or *ph* |
| צ (ץ at end of word) | *s* (hissing sound) |
| ק Kōph | *q*, *k* |
| ר Rēsh | *r* |
| שׁ,ש Sīn, Shīn | *s*, *sh* |
| ת Taw, Tav | *t* or *th* |

The following groups of consonants are peculiarly liable to confusion:

כ ב Beth, Caph.
ו ר ד Daleth, Resh, Vav.
ת ח ה He, Kheth, Tav.
ר ל Lamed, Resh.
פ מ Mem, Pe.
כ ם Samech, Caph.

## CHAPTER II

### PROVERBS I.—IX. 18

PROVERBS III. 4.

*So shalt thou find favour and good understanding*
*In the sight of God and man.*—R.V.

The Revised Version suggests in the margin "good repute" for "good understanding," and if the Hebrew word שֵׂכֶל will bear this meaning, which is however extremely doubtful, the text may stand. In xii. 8 the quality of good understanding (*i.e.* insight or prudence) is mentioned as deserving praise. This would seem to indicate that the word itself cannot be regarded except as the internal quality of its possessor. The slightest possible change, that of a *resh* in place of a *lamed*, will give שָׂכָר (reward), and the translation will thus be:

*So shalt thou find favour and a rich (good) reward*
*In the sight of God and man.*

PROVERBS III. 21.

*My son, let them not depart from thine eyes,*
*Keep sound wisdom and discretion.*—R.V.

There is nothing in any previous line to which "them" can refer, nor can it be supposed to look forward to the two nouns in the second line. Toy inverts the lines, or, as an alternative, suggests that "my words" should be supplied. In the end, however, he allows that these expedients do not meet the case, and

says that no emendation is possible. What actually happened is very simple. In the original text there were three *lameds* coming all together. No wonder that one of the three was dropped!

We conjecture that the original text read אליל ילן ("let vanity depart"), and that this was altered to the present M.T., אל ילוו. Fortunately such alterations almost invariably leave some trace behind them.

The scribe who made the mistake was probably influenced by iv. 21: "Let them not depart from thine eyes," where "my sayings" is the antecedent subject.

PROVERBS III. 27.

*Withhold not good from them to whom it is due.*

The phrase "them to whom it is due," Heb. בעליו, is under suspicion; it should mean "possessors." The LXX reads "the needy." This implies the reading רעב, which pre-supposes the not infrequent confusion between *lamed* and *resh*, and a re-arrangement of the consonants in order to compensate for the mistake. It is quite possible that the reading of the LXX is correct. The suggestion רָעֵיךָ = רעב is not impossible, since it is in a measure confirmed by רעב, with the change of ב into כ, a very common confusion. The reader may be left to choose between "from the hungry" and "from thy neighbours."

PROVERBS III. 30.

*Strive not with a man without cause,*
*If he have done thee no harm.*—R.V.

The weakness of this couplet, its obvious tautology and lack of parallelism, seem to have passed without notice. There is, however, no need to presume the presence of corruption. The mistake has been that the particles אם לא have been taken separately, "if . . . not," whereas they should be taken together as a strong affirmative—"surely": or, if preferred, as a negative

question. The LXX has given the sense correctly, translating "lest he should do thee some evil." The verb translated in the English versions as "done" should be taken in its strict sense as "repay." With these merely grammatical changes the couplet will run:

*Strive not with a man without cause,*
*Surely, if thou dost, he will repay thee evil.*

This injunction receives its best commentary in Bishop Butler's well-known sermon "Upon Forgiveness of Injuries":

> Malice or resentment . . . hath plainly a tendency to beget the same passion in him who is the object of it. . . . Neither is it at all uncommon to see persons, in this progress of strife and variance, change parts; and him, who was at first the injured person, become more injurious and blameable than the aggressor.

The proverb has put this truth so succinctly that its deep meaning has passed unperceived.

PROVERBS III. 35.

*The wise inherit glory,*
*But shame shall be the promotion of fools.*—A.V. and R.V.

R.V. mg. *Fools carry away shame.*

The Versions give similar renderings, none of which are at all probable. The scholars who accept the text as correct translate it variously—"shame exalts fools"; "shame sweeps away fools"; "fools carry off shame." The A.V. follows the Vulgate *stultorum exaltatio ignominia*, which is a paraphrase evading the difficulty. The editors who emend do so also variously —"change (their glory) into shame" (*cf.* Hos. iv. 7); "increase shame" or "possess shame." The emendation now to be given was made in an entirely different way, a way merely prosaic and mechanical, viz. by the substitution of an easily mistaken consonant, nay, of the very same consonant, as to which a mistake was

made in the previous verse, the substitution of a *pē* for a *mem*. This gives פרים from פרה, "to propagate." Thus the sense will be:

*The wise inherit glory,*
*But fools propagate shame.*

PROVERBS V. 6.

*Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life,*
*Her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them.*—A.V.

*So that she findeth not the level path of life,*
*Her ways are unstable, and she knoweth it not.*—R.V.

*Lest thou weigh carefully the path of life,*
*Her ways are unstable, thou canst not know them.*—R.V. mg.

None of these renderings gives a satisfactory sense. The grammar also is imperfect, since the use of פן ("lest") in a sentence preceding the principal clause of the sentence is inadmissible. The main error seems connected with the verb תפלס, which is variously rendered "make level" or "ponder." This word undoubtedly occurs iv. 26: "Ponder (make level) the path of thy feet," and it seems probable that the scribe was influenced by this earlier verse. The real word may be conjectured to have been תסלף ("she perverteth"), *cf.* xix. 3: "The folly of a man perverteth his way." For פן ("lest") it is best to read בני ("my son"), since this word is needed in order to give a subject in the second person singular to the verb "thou knowest."

The couplet as restored will therefore be:

*She perverteth, O my son, the way of life,*
*Her paths are unstable, so that thou canst not know them.*

PROVERBS VI. 5.

*Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand* (of the hunter),
*And as a bird from the hand of the fowler.*—R.V.

The R.V. is no doubt right in adding the words "of the hunter," but wrong in supposing that this can

be done without an actual addition being made to the text. The LXX read "from the snares," from which it has been inferred that they read חבלים ("cords"). This is suitable enough in meaning, but unsuitable graphically, and so falls short of real probability. It seems preferable to suppose that the corruption is anterior to the LXX, and that their reading is merely an emendation. What is needed here, as elsewhere, is that the word selected should explain its own disappearance. It would seem best to suppose that the missing word is ציד ("a hunter"), and that it was dropped by reason of its resemblance to the previous words מיד ("from the hand of"). In favour of this suggestion is the improvement made in the parallelism.

PROVERBS VI. 26.

*For on account of a whorish woman* (a man is brought)
*to a piece of bread;*
*And the adulteress hunteth for the precious life.*—
R.V.

The solution of this difficult passage is found in the LXX, which renders: "For the price of a harlot (*τιμὴ πόρνης*) is that of a piece of bread, but an adulteress (lit. 'a wife of men') hunteth for precious lives." This obviously gives the sense of the passage, but it has doubtless been overlooked, because it could not be extracted from the text as it stands, and was therefore regarded as a mere paraphrase. It is, in fact, an exact translation of the original text, as shall now be shown. The word *τιμή* is found in the LXX rendering of Lev. v. 15, 18; xxvii. 2, *ἡ τιμὴ τοῦ ἄρσενος*, and elsewhere. In all these places it stands as the equivalent for the Hebrew ערך. There is, therefore, a strong presumption that it does so in the present verse. At first sight there does not seem any indication of the presence of this word here. The word would of course be written ערכ, but *resh* is commonly confused with *daleth*, and *caph* with *beth*. Assume that both these mistakes have been

made here, and we have ערב, which a scribe would, according to the custom of his kind, turn into בעד ("on account of"). In defence of the poor scribe it must be urged that he had no dictionary to help him; but this is no excuse for the modern scholar, nor, may I add, for myself, since I plead guilty to having missed the clue up to the eleventh hour.

The translation will of course be:

*For the price of a harlot is a piece of bread,*
*But the adulteress hunteth for the precious life.*

PROVERBS VI. 30, 31.

*Men do not despise a thief if he steal*
*To satisfy his soul when he is hungry,*
*But if he be found he shall restore sevenfold;*
*He shall give all the substance of his house.*—R.V.

There is an obvious difficulty here, which should certainly have led to the text being regarded with grave suspicion. Men make, it is said, allowance for the poor thief, who steals because he is hungry, but what allowance is it if he have to restore sevenfold, and actually have to surrender all his property? What greater punishment could possibly have been exacted? If this be mercy, give us justice! It might also be pointed out that there is a lack of logic in the sentence as it stands. How do men know that the thief is a thief at all, until he be *found out*, for this is the correct meaning of the word translated "found"? Thus the passage is obviously corrupt. Its emendation is by no means difficult, though it is only right to say in excuse for the editors, that it was not until after many attempts that it revealed its secret. Suspicion evidently rests upon the words כי ירעב ("if he be hungry"), for after the statement that "he steals to satisfy his soul," or more accurately "his appetite," "if he be hungry" is evidently tautological.

All that is needed is to alter the order of the con-

sonants of רעב into רבע (" the adulterer "). The passage will then give an excellent sense :

*Men do not despise a thief,*
*If he steal to satisfy his hunger ;*
*But the adulterer, when found out, shall restore sevenfold,*
*He shall give all the substance of his house.*

PROVERBS VII. 22, 23.

*He goeth after her straightway,*
*As an ox goeth to the slaughter,*
Or as a fool to the correction of the stocks,
*Till a dart strike through his liver.*—A.V.

Heb. וּכעכס אל מוּסר אויל.

*As fetters to the correction of a fool.*—R.V.

The third line is evidently corrupt. The word translated fetters (R.V.) is used in Isaiah iii. 18 " anklets," but there is no evidence that it ever means fetters.

As a starting point, which in fact gives a clue to the true method of reconstruction, it should be noticed that the LXX instead of אויל (" fool ") evidently reads אַיָּל (" a stag "), and this reading also appears in the Syriac and in the Targum.

With this evidence in its favour it seems very strange that previous editors have passed over this reading, even though Prof. Toy has seen that " the parallelism suggests the mention of an animal." It may be assumed, therefore, that the versions preserve the true reading.

Arguing from this it may be presumed that the stag was doing something that rendered it liable to be shot, *e.g.* that it was interfering with the crops. It is probable that the word עכס masks a rare word which expresses such interference. The word עסס (" trample ") is so very similar that its adoption is inevitable. What then was it which was trampled ? The word עסיסית (" crushed wheat ") from the same root suggests wheat.

Is there any possibility of finding a reference to wheat in the Hebrew words אל מוסר (" unto correction ") ?

The first three letters clearly suggest the word " sheaves," of which the construct case is אלמי. All that remains is the word סר, which evidently conceals בר (" wheat "). The verse as emended will therefore read :

*As a stag trampleth sheaves of wheat,*
*Until a shaft pierceth his liver.*

This emendation has in its favour that it gives unity to the whole passage. There are now three comparisons, all concerned with outward nature : the ox going to the slaughter ; the stag shot while trespassing ; and the bird caught unawares in the net—all of them illustrating the sudden fate befalling the youth void of understanding. Of these three comparisons, the second, as now restored, is certainly the best, since it does not only illustrate the fate of the young man, but his sin of adultery, under the appropriate figure of trespassing after forbidden sheaves.

PROVERBS VIII. 12.

*I wisdom dwell with prudence,*
*And find out knowledge of witty inventions.*—A.V.

The verb in the Hebrew " inhabit " has been regarded by many editors as highly inappropriate, but no probable suggestion has been made. The context deals with the nature of wisdom as concerned with the practical tact and insight needed for the life of common men. In verse 3 wisdom crieth at the gates of the city. Hence I am inclined to suggest that the final ה of the word ערמה (" prudence ") has been wrongly inserted by the copyists, and that the true reading is ערים (" cities ").

*I wisdom inhabit cities*
*And discover knowledge of good inventions.*

PROVERBS VIII. 26.

*While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields,*
*Nor the highest part of the dust of the world.*—A.V.

*Nor the beginning of the dust of the world.*—R.V.
R.V. mg. *sum.*

Heb. וראש עפרות תבל.

The only word which excites suspicion is the word ראש, which has hitherto been regarded as impeccable, in spite of the fact that it has been very variously translated, *e.g.* "highest part," "beginning," "first," "sum," or "mass." It does not seem to have been noticed that the kindred word ראשית ("beginning") occurs in verse 22, and that the word itself occurs in verse 23, "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning." Thus the word would naturally be in the mind of the scribe, and if he came to a word at all like it he would, not improbably, suppose that he was dealing with the word itself.

Now there is a word which, but for the order of its consonants, is extremely like the word ראש, viz. the word רשא, which occurs in Joel ii. 22: "the pastures of the wilderness do grow green"; *cf.* also Gen. i. 11.

What happened appears to be that a scribe misread a *resh* for a *daleth*, and, being faced by the hopeless word רשא, naturally supposed that the order of the consonants was in fault, thus reading ראש ("a head," or "beginning") a word already in his mind as having so recently occurred. The passage as restored will be:

*While as yet he had not made the ground, nor the fields,*
*And the dust of the world had not grown green.*

PROVERBS IX. 12.

*If thou art wise, thou art wise for thyself,*
*And if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.*—R.V.

The LXX render καὶ τοῖς πλήσιον, *i.e.* "for thy neighbours." Thus for לך they evidently read לרעיך. The decision between these two readings must largely

be a matter of private opinion. The greater age of the LXX text, and the greater probability that letters should have been dropped than that they should have been inserted, seems in favour of the reading "for thy neighbours." The motive assigned for the pursuit of wisdom, viz. that one should seek it for the sake of others, is certainly a higher motive than that it should be sought with a view to personal advantage.

PROVERBS IX. 13.

*The foolish woman is clamorous,*
*She is simple and knoweth nothing,*
*And she sitteth,* etc.—R.V.

"And knoweth nothing," or more accurately, "knoweth not what." The LXX reads preferably "she knoweth not shame." The reading בֹּלמה was suggested by Jaeger, and is followed by Toy. There is little doubt that the suggestion of a substantive imperfectly written is correct, but the particular substantive selected does not afford any indication of how the mistake arose. A better suggestion would be that the word concealed is really ערמה ("discretion"), the first syllable having fallen out owing to its resemblance to the consonants of the verb translated "knoweth." This word occurs in Prov. i. 4 and viii. 5, in both cases being accompanied by the word "simple"; *cf.* also xix. 25.

This simplicity is not of ignorance, but denotes the lack of the moral sense, and it is because she is *simple* in this sense that she makes exhibition of herself in public places.

Translate:

*She is simple and knoweth not discretion.*

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## CHAPTER III

### PROVERBS X. 1—XXII. 16

PROVERBS X. 9.

*He that walketh uprightly walketh surely,*
*But he that perverteth his ways shall be known.*—R.V.

The lack of contrast between the two lines, and the foolishness of the second line, renders " shall be known " very doubtful. The error is a very simple one, the confusion between *resh* and *daleth*. Thus for יורע read ירוע ; cf. xi. 15 ; xiii. 20.

*He that perverteth his ways shall suffer hurt.*

PROVERBS X. 13.

*In the lips of him that hath discernment wisdom is found ;*
*But a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding.*—R.V.

Not all the apologies of the commentators have failed to conceal the absolute futility of this couplet, but the fault is not that of the author, but of his interpreters. The insertion of " is," which appeared so much a matter of course to the revisers that they did not even put it in italics, as was done by the A.V., is the sole cause of an error, which has turned a fine proverb into incoherence. If this " is " be dropped, the translation will of course be this :

*In the lips of him that hath discernment wisdom is found,*
*And a rod for the back of him that lacketh understanding.*

For the connexion between the mouth and a rod, *cf.* xiv. 3. This interpretation is actually that of the LXX, which renders : " He who bringeth wisdom out of his lips, striketh with a rod the man that hath no heart." What is intended by the proverb is to show that wisdom is of value both positively and negatively : it instructs the ignorant, and exposes the fool, and is needed in both offices.

PROVERBS X. 32.

*The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable ;*
*But the mouth of the wicked* (speaketh) *frowardness.*—
A.V. and R.V.

This can hardly be right. The word " know " seems inapplicable to " lips," though it would have been suitable if it had had " heart " as its subject. The interpolation of the word " speaketh " both in the A.V. and R.V. betrays a consciousness that all is not right with this verse, and the alternative " is " which takes the place of " speaketh " in the margin of the R.V. is weak. Fortunately the remedy is easy. There are several instances to be put forward subsequently in which the scribes have failed to recognise the somewhat rare verb ערה, " to make bare," and hence " to empty " or " pour out." Thus by rectifying the common confusion between *resh* and *daleth*, and by the transposition of adjacent letters, ידעון becomes יערון. This gives an excellent sense. For the meaning *cf.* Isaiah xxxii. 15.

Translate :

*The lips of the righteous pour forth acceptableness,*
*But the mouth of the wicked* (poureth forth) *frowardness.*

It should be mentioned that the LXX in most MSS. reads ἀποστάζει (" drops "), which confirms the suggestion made above.

PROVERBS XI. 21.

(Though) *hand* (join) *in hand, the evil man shall not be unpunished,*
*But the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.*—R.V.

This certainly cannot stand, as is generally allowed by the editors, for there is more to be added than the Hebrew can possibly bear. The marginal rendering of the A.V., "My hand upon it," seems worse rather than better, nor do I see how it can be got from the text, which must mean "my hand upon my hand." It is safer to presume some corruption in the text. I would suggest that the common confusion of *resh* with *daleth* has led the scribes to alter the order of the consonants. Their present order is דלר, my suggestion is merely that the final *daleth* should be read as *resh*, and that the *lamed* should stand first. This would give לדר, which means "for ever." This gives the excellent sense,

*The evil man shall not always go unpunished,*
*But the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.*[1]

PROVERBS XI. 30.

*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life;*
*And he that is wise winneth souls.*—R.V.

The traditional translation is more beautiful than accurate, certainly in its supposed reference to winning souls for God. The ordinary meaning of the phrase is to "take away life," and thus the second half of the sentence should form a contrast to the first half. This is so in the LXX, which renders: "But the souls of evil-doers are taken away before their time." It is therefore evident that the noun חכם ("wise") did not

[1] It will be noticed that the two Yods in the phrase rendered "hand in hand" have been disregarded for the purpose of the argument. The scribes and Masoretes allowed themselves great liberty with Yod and Vav, probably having no clear distinction in their minds between them when used as vowels and as consonants.

appear in the earliest MSS. What word must take its place? Here I gladly accept a suggestion made by Prof. Hooke, *cf.* Peake's Commentary *in loc.* He reads חמם (violence) which has, as he says, support from the LXX. I can add in its favour the two important facts, that the confusion between *caph* and *samech* is frequent, and that the alteration in the order of consonants constantly accompanies any mistake due to consonantal confusion. Thus I am able to supply reasons confirming his suggestion.

The translation will now be:

*The fruit of righteousness is a tree of life,*
*But violence destroyeth men's lives.*

PROVERBS XII. 12.

*The wicked desireth the net of evil men,*
*But the root of the righteous yieldeth* (fruit).—A.V. and R.V.

This verse is evidently corrupt, and no emendation of the strange phrase "net of evil men" is at all probable (*cf.* Toy *in loc.*). For the word *net* מצוד read מצור, a siege. This simple change, which is made by editors in Eccles. ix. 14, would probably have been made here also, but for the fact that "the siege of evil men" gives no better sense than the present phrase. Another change is needed, רעים should be ערים ("cities"). In the second line we accept the reading איתן ("firm") *vice* יִתֵּן, as supported by LXX ἐν ὀχυρώμασιν ("in fortresses"), an emendation confirmed by verse 3, "The root of the righteous shall not be moved." Thus altered, the passage gives an excellent sense:

*The wicked desireth the overthrow of cities,*
*But the root of the righteous is firm.*

PROVERBS XII. 26.

*The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,*
*But the way of the wicked seduceth them.*—A.V.

*The righteous is a guide to his neighbour,*
*But the way of the wicked causeth them to err.*—R.V.

Heb. יתר מרעהו צדיק.

Neither of these two renderings gives any real meaning. The main difficulty is concerned with the word יתר. The A.V. connects it with the root which implies "excellence" or "excess," the R.V. with a quite different root (תור), which means "search." Dr. Toy considers that neither of these is apposite in itself, nor at all related to the second clause. His own emendation, יסר מרעה ("turns away from evil"), gives a fair sense, but is graphically improbable, since ס is quite unlike ת. It may, therefore, be concluded that none of the suggestions hitherto advanced are of any real value.

It seems best to suppose that a *resh* has taken the place of an original *daleth*, and that we should read יתד ("a tent pin"). This word is frequently used of that which gives stability, and metaphorically for a "ruler," as giving stability to a nation; *cf.* Isaiah xxii. 23, 25 (Eliakim), also Ezra ix. 8. But this is the very idea demanded by the context here.

*The righteous is a support to his friend.*

PROVERBS XII. 27.

*The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting,*
*But the substance of a diligent man is precious.*—A.V.

*The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting,*
*But the precious substance of men* (is to) *the diligent.*—R.V.

The second line of this couplet is open to serious objection. As it stands it is:

"The wealth (of) a man (is) precious, diligent." Thus the word "diligent" must be transposed (A.V.), or there must be the insertion of a preposition before "diligent" (R.V.).

Neither of these alterations is admissible, and even if they are resorted to, the parallelism of the couplet remains so poor that Prof. Toy says that "the two clauses are unrelated to each other—each clause has lost its parallel."

There is, however, the contrast between slothfulness and diligence, which seems to show that the two lines were originally related, though the latter of them has apparently suffered in transmission.

Special attention should be given to what will be readily granted by the student, viz. that in any parallelism the two clauses should be of a certain equivalency, *i.e.* that they should not merely relate to the same subject, but that they should be of the same character. A merely general statement is sufficiently paralleled by another general statement, but a vivid concrete instance demands something equally dramatic in its sequel. As the text now stands, this congruity is conspicuous by its absence. The highly figurative expressions of the first line—"the slothful roasts not what he took in hunting"—are unequally yoked together with the general aphorism, that the industrious takes care of his property. What is dramatic in the beginning should be dramatic in the ending. Besides, the reader would naturally want to know how the industrious would comport himself if he were placed in similar circumstances to those of the slothful. The latter has brought down his quarry, but is too idle to roast it, even to satisfy his hunger. But what about the industrious? What is he doing while his companion is lying on his back, and wishing he had brought something to eat? It is no answer to be told that he is careful of his property; we want to know what he did with the skin, and if any emendation can tell us this it will have solid evidence in its favour.

Now the text reads as follows : הון אדם ילר. It might, however, have been divided thus : הנאד מלר, *i.e.* the diligent man valueth the skin.[1]

This emendation completes the proverb in a very satisfactory manner, and with the very minimum of alteration. The source of the mistake was, of course, that the adjacent letters א, ד, and מ, were naturally taken as composing the word אדם (" man ").

It may be mentioned that it is also possible to read פקד, *i.e.* " attends to," or " prepares."

*The diligent man prepares the skin.*

This is perhaps an improvement, since it implies activity.

PROVERBS XII. 28.

*In the way of righteousness is life,*
*And in the pathway thereof there is no death.*—R.V.

The second line is untranslatable, and the rendering of the R.V. " contains as many mistakes as could be packed into so short a sentence " (Peake's Commentary *in loc.*). The LXX renders " the way of the wicked is unto death," which is a fair paraphrase of the probable meaning, but is not deducible from the Hebrew text, which literally rendered is :

*The way of its path* (נתיבה) *is unto death.*

The crucial difficulty is to discover what is concealed beneath this word נתיבה. The only method of arriving at a sound conclusion is by consideration of the following significant parallels. The important words are in italics.

v. 5, 6. " Her feet go down *to death.*
She perverteth *the way of life.*
Her paths are unstable . . ."

[1] The Vav and Yod being disregarded, see p. 39.

vii. 27. " Her house is the way of Sheol,
Going down to the *chambers of death*."

Still more apposite is ii. 18, 19, 20 :

" Her house inclineth *unto death*,
And her paths unto the dead.
None that go unto her return again,
Neither do they attain unto the paths of *life*.
That thou mayest walk in the way of good men,
And keep the *paths of the righteous*."

It will be seen that all the important words of the present proverb occur in other passages, and that all these passages have to do with a single subject, " the strange woman." Hence it seems probable that a word has been dropped, and that נחיבה was preceded by the word נכריה (" a strange woman "). The general resemblance between the two words is obvious, and this, combined with the verbal identities seen in the parallel passages, gives this suggestion strong support. The sense could hardly be bettered :

*In the path of righteousness is life,*
*But the way of the strange woman is a pathway to death.*

PROVERBS XIII. 1.

*A wise son* (heareth) *his father's instruction,*
*But a scorner heareth not rebuke.*—A.V. and R.V.

The difficulty of this verse is the absence of a verb in the first clause ; the verb " heareth " of the English Versions being added by the translators. It is very unlikely that the positive " heareth " should have to be inferred from the negative " heareth not " which comes in the second clause of the proverb. A very simple emendation for מוסר (" instruction ") is מוסד (" support " or " stay "). The relevance of the proverb

as thus emended can best be realised by one who has himself experienced its truth, and has found that

*A wise son is a stay to his father.*

PROVERBS XIII. 5.

*A righteous man hateth lying ;*
*But a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame.*
—R.V.

The parallelism is weak, and appears still weaker if the first line is translated as dealing with malevolence rather than with untruth. The verb חפר ("be ashamed") may very well be the word of exactly similar form meaning "dig," which is frequently used of making plots, and hiding them secretly; *cf.* Psalm xxxv. 7. All that remains is to deal with יבאיש ("is loathsome"). This may stand for the preposition ב ("against") followed by איש ("a man"). The dropping of the ו ("and") need cause no difficulty, for the word was constantly added by the scribes, when they thought it to be needed.

The sense will thus be :

*A righteous man hateth false witness,*
*But a wicked man layeth snares for his neighbour.*

This greatly improves the parallelism, and the two changes mutually support one another.

PROVERBS XIII. 10.

*Only by pride cometh contention,*
*But with the well advised is wisdom.*—A.V.

*By pride cometh only contention.*—R.V.

The A.V. follows the text, and it is doubtful whether the translation given in the R.V. is allowable. It seems much better to regard רק as the adjective used of persons (2 Sam. vi. 20), and thus to follow the LXX, which translates by *κακός* (ריק).

*A vain fellow by insolence causeth contention.*
*But with the well-advised is wisdom.*

PROVERBS XIII. 15.

*Good understanding giveth favour,*
*But the way of the treacherous is rugged.*—R.V.

There is no justification for "rugged" (איתן), the word meaning "enduring" or "permanent," and being always used in a good sense. The editors have commonly supposed that the two lines belong to different couplets. This suggestion does not remove the difficulty, since it could never be said that "the way of the treacherous is enduring."

It does not seem to have been noticed that the word "every" (כל) in the next couplet is not wanted, and that it would be much better without it:

*A prudent man worketh with knowledge,*
*But a fool spreadeth out folly.*

What is now to be suggested is that כל belongs to the present couplet and that the original reading was יתנכל ("is deceitful").

The addition of the *aleph* is a frequent device adopted by the scribes. Here, owing to the transference of the כל to the next verse, the scribe was confronted by יתנ which he naturally turned into איתן.

PROVERBS XIII. 19.

*The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul,*
*But it is an abomination to fools to depart from evil.*—R.V.

The connexion is obscure, and it has been commonly supposed that two unrelated lines have been put together. This supposition has so often been found needless that it is better to regard the passage as corrupt. The simplest remedy is to take "desire" in its bad sense, *i.e.* "lust," and to alter תערב ("is sweet") into תרעב ("starveth"); *cf.* x. 3:

*Suffer the soul of the righteous to famish.*

This will give :

*Lust when it is finished starveth the soul,*
*But it is an abomination to fools to depart from evil.*

This gives the sense as being that sin retains its fascination in spite of numberless experiences of disillusionment.

PROVERBS XIII. 23.

*Much food is in the tillage of the poor :*
*But there is that is destroyed by reason of injustice.*—R.V.

The antithesis between these two clauses is imperfect, if it can, indeed, be said to exist at all. The LXX was evidently in great perplexity, and ventures upon a mere paraphrase of what seemed to the translators to be the general sense of the passage, viz. a contrast between the righteous and the unrighteous as regards their ultimate fate.

*The righteous shall pass many years in prosperity,*
*But the unrighteous shall perish suddenly.*

This translation is so far removed from the Hebrew text that it gives no appreciable help towards reconstruction. It is hardly worth while to attempt to criticise the R.V. translation, which is substantially also that of the A.V. So far as we are aware, no probable emendation has been suggested. In dealing with this passage the impression would be natural that it has suffered severely in transmission and that there is very little to go upon. If the emendation now to be suggested is correct, the contrary is the case. The method adopted was to begin with the second clause. This clause ends with a legal term " injustice," and for this reason it seemed probable that the first clause might have something to do with legality. At first sight this was not the case, but the inclusion of a single vowel turns רב (" much ") into ריב, a lawsuit.

When this alteration is made, and it must be noted that the word ריב would be written רב in the early MSS., the sentence gives a good and cogent sense. Its subject is "the law's delays," and the inequality of justice when sought by the poor. It may be translated:

*A suit at law devours the tillage of the poor,*
*And there is that perisheth by reason of injustice.*

PROVERBS XIV. 1.

*Every wise woman buildeth her house,*
*But the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.*—
A.V. and R.V.

The translation should be, as pointed out by Toy:

*The wise among women builds* (every one) *her house,*
*But folly with her hands tears it down.*

The collocation of the concrete "wise" with the abstract "folly" and the plural nominative with the singular verb (builds) is, however, most unusual. Toy omits the word נשים ("women"), which is arbitrary. It is better to suppose that the last letter *mem* stands for a *pe*, and that the true order of the consonants has been altered. This will give חכמת נפש ("wisdom of soul"); the ו is no doubt a scribal addition.

The sentence will then become a forcible contrast:

*Wisdom of soul buildeth a house,*
*But folly with her hands teareth it down.*

This gives an excellent sense. Wisdom is constructive, folly only destructive—a warning true in many departments of life.

For the phrase "wisdom of soul" *cf.* xxiv. 14: "So shall the knowledge of wisdom be to thy soul."

PROVERBS XIV. 7.

*Go into the presence of a foolish man,*
*And thou shalt not perceive in him the lips of knowledge.*

Mg. *Go from . . . for thou wilt not, etc.*—R.V.

This is a very troublesome verse. Instead of בל ידעת (" thou shalt not know ") the LXX reads " instruments of knowledge," which represents כלי דעת. This phrase does not seem a very happy one, and it would be certainly better to read יבלי דעת (" streams "—prop. " conduits of knowledge " ; *cf.* Isaiah xxx. 25).

The verse would thus be a warning and an invitation :

*Go from the presence of a foolish man,*
*But wise lips are channels of wisdom.*

This emendation is nearer to the M.T. than is the reading of the LXX ; and the difference is merely a matter of vocalisation. The close approximation of two words, both capable of meaning knowledge, seems to point to both being nouns, rather than a verb and a noun.

PROVERBS XIV. 9.

*Fools make a mock of sin ;*
*But among the righteous there is favour.*—A.V.

*The foolish make a mock of guilt ;*
*But among the upright there is goodwill.*—R.V.

*Guilt mocketh at the foolish.*—R.V. mg.

This familiar verse is by no means so simple as it sounds, for in the first clause the verb is singular though the noun is plural. Should the sentence be inverted as in the margin of the R.V., the idea of guilt mocking at fools is unsatisfactory and unnatural. No emendations have been made at all deserving of notice. It is sur-

prising that so little attention has been accorded to the rendering of the LXX:

*The houses of transgressors will owe* (need) *purification,*
*But the houses of the righteous are acceptable.*

This rendering is impossible, but it deserves careful study. The word for houses is without doubt אהלים. This suggests that the original text may have contained a word like אהלים. I suggest that this word was אלהים ("God"). The change may have arisen because in the next verse but one the word אהל ("a tent") may easily have influenced the scribe to believe that the same word ought to stand in both verses. Prov. iii. 34, "He (the Lord) scorneth (יליץ) the scorners," is like the present verse both in meaning and form. The word "favour" (רצון) is commonly used of the favour of God, and as Prof. Toy remarks, the name of God is needed here—now we have it—*cf.* xi. 1; xv. 8, and xii. 22. We therefore restore:

*God mocketh at the guilty,*
*But among the righteous is his favour.*

It should, of course, be noticed that אלהים takes the verb in the singular; this of itself is almost sufficient evidence in favour of this emendation.

PROVERBS XIV. 13.

For the emendation of this verse see note on xxiv. 23.

PROVERBS XIV. 33.

*Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding.*
*But* (that which is) *in the inward part of fools is made known.*—R.V.

The literal translation is "in the heart of him that hath understanding resteth wisdom, but in the inward part of fools it makes itself known." This is obviously impossible. Toy changes תודע ("is known") to אולת ("folly"), which change he considers "not to be violent."

The clue is given by the Latin Version which reads, "it will teach fools also." This reading, though of no value in itself, serves to indicate that the missing word ended with an ה. We may conjecture that this word, a somewhat rare word, was תועה, meaning "error." The parallelism is now excellent:

*Wisdom resteth in the heart of the man of understanding,*
*But error in the inward part of fools.*

Fools have not got *hearts*, they have only *inward parts!*

PROVERBS XV. 7.

*The lips of the wise disperse knowledge,*
*But the heart of the foolish* (doeth) *not so.*

Mg. *is not steadfast.*—R.V.

The translation given by A.V. and R.V. is intolerably weak, and the marginal alternative, which has the support of the LXX, is not much better. I have tried various emendations without success, and am constrained to believe that the phrase לא־כן has coalesced into an actual substantive, exactly represented by the one word "untruth."

*The lips of the wise disperse knowledge,*
*But the heart of the foolish disperseth untruth.*

This seems to give better sense and closer parallelism. This suggestion is confirmed by Jer. xlviii. 30, which should be rendered: "his boastings are untruth; they do untruth"; *cf.* also Isaiah xvi. 6. For parallels, *cf.* Oxford Dict., p. 510, col. 2; also Psalm. xliv. 13. Dr. Naish informs me that this usage is very frequent in Syriac.

PROVERBS XV. 26.

*Evil devices are an abomination to the Lord,*
*But pleasant words are pure.*—R.V.

The treatment meted out to this verse is typical. The R.V., as is only too usual, translates as if there were

no difficulty at all. Dr. Peake's Commentary rightly says that the second line is in disorder, and resorts to transposition, not a very probable expedient. The verse as it stands is as follows :

" The pure words of pleasantness."

The A.V. boldly renders :

" *The words* of the pure are pleasant words."

The LXX renders :

" The words of the pure are pleasant."

All these renderings are obviously make-shifts, and the R.V. is the worst offender, for while it is true that the words of the pure are pleasant, it is by no means true that all pleasant words are pure.

The emendation of the verse is so simple that it is strange that it has been missed, and yet it is the simplest things that are really the most difficult to discover, and it was not until my final revision that it struck me that all that was necessary was to change אמרי (" words of ") into אמרו (" they speak ") :

*The pure speak pleasant things,*

or, still better, " what pleaseth Him," since this is implied in the parallelism.

PROVERBS XVI. 1.

*The preparations of the heart belong to man,*
*But the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.*—R.V.

It is difficult to assign a meaning to this proverb, and one suspects corruption. The gloss appended to the Syriac Version, a quotation from Sirach iii. 18, " And thou shalt find favour from the Lord," must have had some connexion with the subject of this proverb. I suggest that this connexion is found in the word " favour," and that the original reading was רצון

("favour") in place of לשון ("tongue"). *Lamed* is occasionally confused with *resh*, and if such were the case here, the context would naturally suggest the alteration of צ into ש.

If this suggestion be allowed, the translation will be:

*The preparations* (plans) *of the heart belong to man,*
*But a favourable answer is from the Lord.*

This would be the Hebrew equivalent of "Man proposes, but God disposes."

PROVERBS XVI. 27.

*An ungodly man diggeth up evil,*
*And in his lips there is as a burning fire.*—A.V.

*A worthless man deviseth mischief,*
*And in his lips there is as a scorching fire.*—R.V.

This couplet seems to have escaped suspicion—*judex damnatur cum nocens absolvitur*—for certainly there is a strange mixture of metaphors. Neither is the phrase כרה רעה ("digging a calamity") equivalent to "digging up evil," nor to the more general term used by the R.V. "deviseth mischief." "To dig a pit" may mean to devise mischief, but the word "pit" is essential to this meaning. Even so the mixture of metaphors remains, and the verse is feeble in the extreme. The emendation now to be proposed demands no alteration of consonants, but only a fresh division of words. The word כור (Prov. xvii. 3) means a furnace, and the ה may go with רעה as the article.

*A base fellow is a furnace of evil,*
*And upon his lips there is as a scorching fire.*

Here there is real continuity in place of the previous mixture of metaphors—the glowing fire of evil in the heart issues in flame from the mouth, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

PROVERBS XVIII. 4.

*The words of a man's mouth are* (as) *deep waters;*
*The well-spring of wisdom is* (as) *a flowing brook.*

Is there here a comparison or a contrast? That this question can be asked is a proof that the couplet is wanting in clearness. It seems strange that the words of an ordinary man should be compared to deep waters, though this might be true of the philosopher. The doubtful phrase is "a man's mouth," its consonants being פאש. It is somewhat suspicious that this phrase occurs lower down in the chapter (verse 20), "from the fruit of a man's mouth." This fact suggests that it was introduced here in order to surmount a difficulty. I suggest that the difficulty arose through the common confusion between *mem* and *pe*, and that the original word was משא ("an oracle"). This accounts for the mistake in a natural way, and gives a good sense. The contrast is between the dark mystery of an oracle, and the sparkling flow of wisdom.

*The words of an oracle are as deep waters,*
*But the fountain of wisdom as a flowing brook.*

PROVERBS XVIII. 9.

*He also that is slack in his work,*
*Is brother to him that is a destroyer.*—R.V.

There is no possible meaning in the word "also," since the previous verse has to do with the quite different subject of the slanderer. It should also be noticed that the translation of the second line fails to show the strong emphasis given to the pronoun "he," and in fact transposes it into the line previous. A full treatment of the evidence cannot be given until the important note on xxiv. 23. It is sufficient to say that this is but another instance of the strange fact there indicated that there is a whole series of proverbs which begin with a meaningless "also," and that all these proverbs are susceptible of the same simple emendation. As is frequently pointed out

elsewhere, *mem* and *pe* are constantly mistaken. Let the *mem* of גם (" also ") be changed to a *pe*, and we have גף here the imperative of the verb נגף (" smite "). The translation will thus be :

*Chastise him that is slack in his work,*
*He is brother to him that is the author of destruction.*

It will be noticed that the pronoun is given its proper emphasis. The proverb is now good and forcible, and illustrates our Lord's words, " He that gathereth not with Me scattereth."

This emendation increases the evidence for the suggestion made in dealing with xxiv. 23.

PROVERBS XVIII. 19.

*A brother offended is* (harder to be won) *than a strong city,*
*And* (such) *contentions are like the bars of a castle.*— R.V.

The words which have to be added in the R.V. sufficiently show that the text is corrupt ; the rendering of the LXX, that " a brother," " a strong city," " the bars of a castle," were all present in their text. Thus the only words which may stand in need of emendation are " offended " and " contentions."

" Offended," נפשע, is rendered in the LXX by *βοηθούμενος*, *i.e.* " helped." This idea cannot be obtained from these four consonants in their present order, but if the *pe* is taken as a *mem*, and the order is altered, we obtain the word משען (" helped," or " a defence "). It should be noted that the word *ἰσχύω*, used here by the LXX, is employed in Isaiah iii. 1 to translate משען, a fact strongly supporting the proposed emendation. The chief argument in its favour is, however, that the resultant sense of the first line is now in harmony with the rendering given by the LXX : " A brother helped by a brother is as a strong city," as compared with the line as emended :

*A brother is a better defence than a strong city.*

The criticism of the second line may now be attempted. The only suspicious word is "contentions," for there is no sense in "contentions are like the bars of a castle." What is needed is evidently some word to correspond with "brother" in the previous line, and this word must resemble the M.T. מדונים. The obvious suggestion is, of course, "friends" (*cf.* xix. 7, and other passages). "Friends" must represent מרעים. Now the *ὑψηλή* of the LXX suggests that they read מרום ("lofty") and proves that they read a *resh* in place of the *daleth* of the M.T. The two letters ני of the M.T. are now altered to ע, the mistake being probably due either to a careless copyist, or to some flaw or blot in the MS.

The verse will now read as follows:

*A brother is a better defence than a strong city,*
*And friends are like the bars of a castle.*

The meaning of the proverb is thus inverted, since it speaks not of the weakness but of the durability of love.

PROVERBS XIX. 2.

This verse is discussed in the notes on xxiv. 23.

PROVERBS XIX. 7.

*All the brethren of the poor do hate him;*
*How much more do his friends go far from him?*
*He pursueth them* (with) *words,*
*Yet they* (are) *wanting to him.*—A.V.

*He pursueth* (them with) *words* (but) *they are gone.*—R.V.

*He pursueth after words which are nought.*—R.V. mg.

Toy regards the last line as unintelligible, condemns the R.V. both in text and margin, and says "it is hardly possible with our present means of information to recover the original form." Peake's Commentary *in loc.* says, "it is clearly part of a lost couplet." Thus it appears that traditional methods have failed.

The main part of the line seems correct—"pursueth"

and "they are not" both suit the context. Suspicion thus fastens upon "words." Heb. אמרים.

Dropping the last syllable for the sake of convenience, we have the three consonants אמר. Of these consonants *mem* is frequently confused with *pe*. But אפר gives no satisfactory meaning. We must, therefore, suppose that there has been a disarrangement in the order. The only order that gives any hope is רפא ("a root meaning weakness"). Replacing the plural termination we obtain רפאים. This word occurs three times in Proverbs, and bears the meaning "ghosts."

*He pursueth ghosts, they vanish.*

No more appropriate word could be conceived, but it was not selected by reason of its appropriateness, but was the outcome of a critical process.

PROVERBS XIX. 22.

*The desire of a man is his kindness;*
*And a poor man is better than a liar.*—A.V.

*The desire of a man is* (the measure of) *his kindness,*
*And a poor man is better than a liar.*—R.V.

After enumerating the very various interpretations suggested by the commentators, Toy allows that it gives no satisfactory sense. The suspicious word is חסדו ("his mercy"). The constant confusion which obtains between *daleth* and *resh* makes it probable that we should read חסרו ("his poverty"). The translation would thus be:

*The desire of a man is his poverty,*
*But a poor man is better than a liar.*

PROVERBS XIX. 27.

*Cease, my son, to hear the instruction* (that causeth) *to err from the words of knowledge.*—A.V.

(Only) *to err.*—R.V.

The parallelism is weak, the construction forced,

and the meaning doubtful. Such a combination of defects always points to corruption.

The Hebrew is (consonants only) חדל בנ לשמע.

What has happened is the inversion of *beth* and *nun*. When these are put in their proper places we have the noun נבל (" fool "). It has been suggested to me by Dr. Ch. Jaeger that there has also been the dropping of a *lamed*, which seems highly probable; *cf.* note on Prov. iii. 21, where, as here, there were three *lameds*, and one dropped out. The meaning is now clear:

*A fool ceaseth to hear instruction,*
*That he may wander from the words of knowledge.*

This observation implies that ignorance is not always a valid excuse, for it may very well happen that the ignorance was intentional.

PROVERBS XX. 16.

*Take his garment that is surety for a stranger,*
*And take a pledge of him for a strange woman.*—A.V.

*Take his garment that is surety for a stranger,*
*And hold him in pledge* (that is surety) *for strangers.*
—R.V.

This is a very puzzling passage. The M.T. has " strangers " in the text, but reads " a strange woman," which is the undoubted reading in xxvii. 13. These seem to be two varying forms of the same proverb. The word which is in doubt is בעד (" on account of ") which gives a poor and clumsy sense. The R.V. bodily inserts " that is surety," greatly improving the sense, though the insertion is not grammatically justified. I accept the insertion, but arrive at it by means of a simple emendation, *i.e.* read ערב *vice* בעד, thus actually repeating the word " is surety for." There is, however, an alternative suggestion. If the M.T. is correct in reading " a strange woman," and the two proverbs are identical, I should venture upon a quite different

suggestion—*cf.* vi. 31 (note), and for בעד should read רבע ("lieth with"):

*Take a pledge of him that lieth with a strange woman.*

PROVERBS XX. 25.

*It is a snare to the man who devoureth* (that which is) *holy,*
*And after vows to make inquiry.*—A.V.

The translation given by the R.V., "rashly to say it is holy," is generally regarded as extremely doubtful. Fortunately the LXX has a rendering which, as Dr. Peake's Commentary remarks, probably conveys the general sense, and this rendering may give a point of departure. In place of the word ילע (variously translated as "devoureth" or "speak rashly"), the LXX has "to dedicate anything of his own."

This seems to give a very appropriate sense. In order to obtain this from the M.T., all that is needed is to insert the letter *pe* and alter the consonantal order, thus making the word פעל, which is used in the sense of a thing made or acquired. The dropping of the *pe* is accounted for by its having been misread as a *mem*, and thus being regarded as a dittograph of the *mem*, the last letter of the previous word אדם ("man"). The dropping of letters is often due to a previous confusion of similar consonants, which causes an apparent dittograph, as in the passage next to be considered.

The translation will be:

*It is a snare to a man to dedicate his property,*
*And after his vows to ask it back again.*

PROVERBS XXI. 4.

*An high look, and a proud heart,*
(Even) *the lamp of the wicked is sin.*—R.V.

The above rendering is an attempt on the part of the revisers to improve upon the translation of the

A.V., "the ploughing of the wicked is sin." The difference is one of vocalisation only, but, as Dr. Peake's Commentary justly remarks, the sense is not appreciably improved. I cannot, however, agree with the suggestion of two unconnected lines belonging to two different proverbs, an expedient often resorted to by Dr. Toy, but which I have never found necessary.

The consonants of the doubtful word, whether rendered "ploughing" or "lamp," are נר. What I suggest is that the original consonants were נדר and that the second, a *daleth*, being mistaken for *resh*, was dropped. The word will then be נדרי ("vows of"):

> *An high look, and a proud heart,*
> (And) *the vows of the wicked are sin.*

This gives an excellent connexion, the gist of the proverb being that it is not so much the external action as the inward disposition which makes a man acceptable to his God. This links the verse with the previous verse in which justice is preferred to sacrifice.

PROVERBS XXI. 5.

> *The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness,*
> *But every one that is hasty hasteth only to want.*—R.V.

This proverb seems to have escaped suspicion, but the parallelism is obviously defective—there is no real opposition between diligence and haste, nor, it may be observed, is there any instance of this adjective "hasty." Further, there is no verb in the second line. Suspicion is therefore directed to the word כל ("every one"). In a very notable passage, soon to be considered (xxvi. 10), כל evidently stands for כסיל ("a fool"). The dropping of the *samech* is accounted for in exactly the same way as the dropping of the *resh* in the verse previous—it being frequently misread for a כ, and this would put two identical letters together, and one of them would naturally be dropped.

Then the proverb will give excellent sense:

*The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness,*
*But the fool hasteth only to scarcity.*

PROVERBS XXI. 6.

*The getting of treasures by a lying tongue,*
*Is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.*—A.V.

*Is a vapour driven to and fro;* (they that seek them) *seek death.*—R.V.

The literal translation is (*cf.* Peake's note): "The getting of treasures by a lying tongue (is) a driven breath, seekers of death."

The R.V. inserts more than is warranted. The LXX reads "a snare of death," which most editors accept. The change does not get rid of the very defective parallelism.

All that is needed is כ for ב, and the redivision of the words, so as to read: נדפם כקש מות, *i.e.* "Death scatters them like stubble."

*Cf.* Isaiah xli. 2: "As driven stubble to his bow." *Cf.* also Jer. xiii. 24. The proverb gains greatly in force and beauty:

*The getting of treasure by a lying tongue,*
*'Tis a vanity, death scattereth them like stubble.*

PROVERBS XXI. 8.

*The way of a man is froward and strange:*
*But as for the pure, his work is right.*—A.V.

The R.V. renders "of him that is laden with guilt," which, as Dr. Peake's Commentary remarks, "is a rendering of an unknown Hebrew form based on a doubtful etymology." He suggests instead of the M.T. זר the

word זר ("insolent"). This suggestion does not account for the *vav*, and the antithesis between insolence and purity is certainly faulty. It seem clear, therefore, that this verse has hitherto not revealed its secret.

Taking the three M.T. letters וזר, suspicion fastens at once upon the *resh* as probably masking a *lamed*. I would also suggest a dropped or miswritten נ. This with a slight alteration in the consonantal order gives נלוז ("crafty"); *cf.* Prov. iii. 32, and also xiv. 2, where this word goes, as in this verse, with the word "way." The improvement in the sense is astonishing:

> *The way of a crafty man is exceeding crooked:*
> *But as for the pure his work is straight.*

PROVERBS XXI. 9.

> *It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop,*
> *Than with a contentious woman in a wide house.*—
> R.V.

Both English Versions translate the concluding words of this proverb as "a wide house," but as the R.V. margin says, the literal Hebrew is "a house of society," and the LXX renders "in a common house," *i.e.* a house occupied by several persons in common. This phrase seems inappropriate in meaning, and not well established, being only found in xxv. 24, which verse is the same as the present verse, and thus cannot be said to count as an authority. Against it is also the fact that it makes a poor antithesis with "the corner of the housetop." Now comes the strange fact that the mere alteration of the order of the consonants actually turns חבר ("society") into רחב ("wide")! The extreme carelessness which marks the opening verses of this chapter makes it very probable that "wide" is the true reading, and if so, the English Versions have given the right translation, though from a faulty text. The same may be said of Matthew's Version of 1551.

PROVERBS XXI. 12.

*The righteous man wisely considereth the house of the wicked ;*
(But God) *overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness.* —A.V.

*The righteous man considereth the house of the wicked,*
(How) *the wicked are overthrown to their ruin.*—R.V.

This passage certainly cannot be translated as is done by our versions. The insertions of the A.V. are quite impossible, and the translation given by the R.V. is merely a paraphrase. Others render " the righteous one (*i.e.* Jahveh) regardeth well the house of the wicked, and maketh the wicked fall into mischief." This, though better than the previous renderings, is hardly possible. There is no instance in Proverbs of God being termed " the Righteous One," nor does it seem in the least likely that " considereth " should be used in the sense of watching in order to punish.

Here the only change needed is infinitesimally small, being confined to the vowels. The word רשע (" wicked " ) should be pointed as רֶשַׁע (" wickedness "). Then the sense becomes at once good and forcible :

*The righteous considereth for his house,*
*But wickedness overthroweth the wicked in ruin.*

PROVERBS XXI. 24.

*Proud and haughty scorner is his name*
*Who dealeth in proud wrath.*—A.V.

*The proud and haughty man, scorner is his name ;*
*He worketh in the arrogance of pride.*—R.V.

This verse is weak to the verge of imbecility. There is no parallelism, and the remark that the proud man bears the name of scorner seems pointless. The most suspicious part of the verse is obviously " scorner is his name." The Hebrew is לֵץ שמו ; the ל must be taken as the preposition, and the ו as an " and." This leaves

the letters צשמ, which need rearrangement into שמצ (" a whisper ") ; or *cf.* Job xxvi. 16, where it means " something inadequate." One other change is needed : יהר (" proud ") into יחר (" is angry ").

The translation will thus be :

*The insolent is angry at the least provocation,*
*And sheweth outrageous passion.*

PROVERBS XXI. 28.

*A false witness shall perish,*
*But the man that heareth shall speak unchallenged.*—R.V.

This is paraphrase, not translation. The word rendered " unchallenged " means literally " continually." The assumption made by the revisers seems to be that two kinds of witnesses are being contrasted, the false witness, and the man who recounts accurately what he has heard. This explanation seems forced, and Peake's Commentary, as so frequently, suggests that this is an example of two disconnected lines. There is no need of any emendation. The two men concerned are the false witness, and a person who has listened to his tales. The false witness dies, but the listener goes on repeating what he has heard.

The translation is quite simple :

*The false witness perisheth,*
*But his listener goes on repeating his story.*

The couplet is the ancient equivalent of " the evil that men do lives after them."

PROVERBS XXII. 11.

*He that loveth pureness of heart,*
*For the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.*—A.V. and R.V.

This translation is a laudable attempt to make something out of nothing. The meaning of the words,

for the sentence has no meaning, is "the grace of the lips, his friend the king." No emendations are satisfactory.

The first step towards reconstruction will probably appear very arbitrary, viz. the substitution of מתק ("sweetness") for מֶלֶךְ ("king"). The reason for this change is as follows:

In xvi. 21, the word מתק is found in conjunction with שפתים ("lips"). The same word occurs in xxvii. 9, in conjunction with the word רעהו.

Now we have in the present verse both שפתים and רעהו. The word "king" (מלך) makes no sense, and מתק seems to fit the meaning far better.

The second step is concerned with רעהו, which is common to this verse and to xxvii. 9, and which makes no sense in either passage. Now there is a verb ערה meaning to "empty" or "pour out"; *cf.* Gen. xxiv. 20; Isaiah liii. 12, and elsewhere. This verb gives a good meaning in both passages in which this strange word רעהו occurs; *cf.* note on xxvii. 9. In the verse now under consideration we therefore read יערה ("poureth out").

The translation will then be as follows:

*He that loveth purity of heart,*
*The grace of his lips poureth forth sweetness.*

But more is yet to be said as to the history of the mistake. When the mistaken words, "his friend," had been introduced into the text, it was necessary to say whose friend. Now the next verse is evidently in confusion:

*The eyes of the Lord guard knowledge,*
*And he overthroweth the words of the transgressor.*

Various commentators have suggested that in place of the Lord we should read "the king." Probably, therefore, the copyist stole the word "king" from that verse, substituting for it the word "Lord." This is a possible source of the error.

The treatment of verse 12 will be better left for a separate note.

PROVERBS XXII. 12.

*The eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge,*
*And he overthroweth the words of the transgressor.*—A.V.

*The eyes of the Lord preserve* (him that hath) *knowledge,*
*And he overthroweth the words of the treacherous man.*—R.V.

As Prof. Hooke remarks, "The R.V. will not pass. The abstract 'knowledge' in Hebrew cannot mean its possessors. The eyes of Jahveh are nowhere said to guard anybody." His own suggestion, "the eyes of Jahveh are upon those who keep knowledge," demands the introduction of the preposition על ("upon"), for which there is no evidence. It is best to read רעת ("evil things") in place of דעת ("knowledge"). As suggested in the previous note, it is possible that for "the Lord" we should read "the King," though this is not essential. The translation will be:

*The eyes of the Lord* (? the King) *observe evil things,*
*And he overthroweth the plans of the treacherous.*

PROVERBS XXII. 16.

*He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches,*
*And he that giveth to the rich* (shall) *surely* (come) *to want.*—A.V.

*He that oppresseth the poor to increase his gain,*
*And he that giveth to the rich cometh only to want.*—R.V.

The additions made by both the above translations, the weak parallelism, and the form of the Hebrew infinitive הרבות, which is not found elsewhere, all combine to cast a doubt upon the text. Fortunately,

emendation is easy. The frequent confusion which obtains between ה and ח, suggests that the right reading should be חרבות ("destructions"); *cf.* Jer. vii. 34; xliv. 22, and Isaiah lxiv. 10.

Possibly this word should be read in the singular; the plural termination having been introduced by the scribe who made the original mistake. The couplet will thus be:

*He that oppresseth the poor* (doeth it) *to his own destruction,*
*He that giveth to the rich doeth it to his own want.*

The parallelism, with its two beginnings and two endings, is remarkably close, and the phraseology most terse and epigrammatic. It is a pity that the English demands "doeth it," for the Hebrew is clear without this addition.

## CHAPTER IV

### PROVERBS XXII. 17 TO END OF BOOK

**Proverbs XXII. 20.**

*Have I not written unto thee excellent* [1] *things*
*Of* [2] *counsels and knowledge?*—R.V.

The word translated "excellent" is certainly an unsolved problem. The only suggestion that seems at all possible is that in place of שלשום we should read משלים ("proverbs"). If this suggestion may be allowed, the translation will be:

*Have I not written unto thee proverbs,*
*With wisdom and knowledge?*

*Mem* and *shin* are alike in some earlier scripts, the only difference being that the former has a tail; see *Cambridge Ancient History*, iii. 432.

**Proverbs XXIII. 7.**

*For as he reckoneth within himself, so is he.*—R.V.

This sentence refers to the man that hath an evil eye, *i.e.* the grudging and avaricious person, against whom the disciple is warned, as he had previously been warned against the rich ruler.

The word translated "reckoneth," שָׁעַר, seems to be used here only, and is supposed to be connected with an Aramaic word meaning "interest." In its favour is the fact that the LXX evidently read the same con-

[1] The word is doubtful. Another reading is *heretofore*.
[2] Or, *in*.

sonants; absurdly enough, it points them so as to give שְׂעָר ("a hair"):

"As if a man swallowed a hair."

The mistake, if there be a mistake, must be of very early date. I suggest that it is a simple blunder of a copyist, and that שער stands for עשר ("the rich man"). Thus the sentence would be translated:

*For as the rich man is in his heart, so is he* (*i.e.* the envious).

PROVERBS XXIII. 17.

*Let not thine heart envy sinners;*
*But* (be thou) *in the fear of the Lord all the day long.*—A.V. and R.V.

The words "be thou" are added without any justification other than the fact that without them the second line, as it stands, makes no sense. Dr. Toy suggests "But fear thou the Lord," etc., but the dropping of the preposition "in" is unwarranted, and the resultant sense is not strong. For היום ("the day") read חיים ("life"), which gives the translation:

*Let not thine heart envy sinners,*
*For in the fear of the Lord is the whole of life.*

*i.e.* "Why envy sinners when the fear of the Lord supplies every want?"

PROVERBS XXIII. 28.

*Yea, she lieth in wait as a robber,*
*And increaseth the treacherous among men.*—R.V.

The second line can hardly stand. The LXX evidently read "destroy," in place of "increase": this does not involve any change in the text, and is inherently probable. Only one alteration is necessary, viz. to read גבורים ("the mighty") for בוגדים ("the treacherous"). This implies that some copyist made the common mistake of misreading *resh* as *daleth*, and

altered the order of the letters in order to make some sort of sense. "The mighty among men" is equivalent to a superlative.

The text will now read:

*Yea, she lieth in wait as a robber,*
*And destroyeth the mightiest of men.*

PROVERBS XXIV. 5.

*A wise man* (is) *strong:*
*Yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength.*—A.V. and R.V.

LXX, *κρείσσων σοφὸς ἰσχυροῦ.*

Here the LXX evidently found מֵעָז for M.T. בְּעֹז in their MSS., which gives better sense. The Oxford Lexicon appears to admit this emendation. The dictionary has not, however, followed the indication supplied by the LXX with regard to the second half of the sentence, since it regards מאמין as a participle (p. 55), whereas it should undoubtedly be pointed as מֵאַמִּין, the מ, a preposition, being as before used in comparison. The phrase "mighty in power" occurs Isaiah xl. 26, also Job ix. 4.

With these alterations, for which the LXX is ample authority, the sentence may be translated as follows:

*A wise man is better than a strong man,*
*And a man of knowledge than he that is mighty in power.*

The superiority of this rendering over that of the English versions is undoubted. The correction is so very obvious that it seems strange that it should have been missed, in whole or in part.

PROVERBS XXIV. 7.

*Wisdom is too high for a fool,*
*He openeth not his mouth in the gate.*—A.V. and R.V.

This, as Prof. Hooke remarks, is literally, "Wisdom is corals for the fool," which cannot, of course, be right,

and our English translation is in fact an emendation. Perhaps the same may be said of the M.T. text, since the opening letter, a *resh*, is written peculiarly, as if to show that it has been added conjecturally. Should it be omitted we have the word אימות (" a terror," lit. " terrors "). This seems to give a good sense :

*Wisdom is a terror to the fool,*
*He openeth not his mouth in the gate.*

The fool does not like open discussion, and endeavours to avoid it upon all possible occasions.

PROVERBS XXIV. 21.

*My son, fear thou the Lord and the king ;*
*And meddle not with them that are given to change ;*
*For their calamity shall rise suddenly ;*
*And who knoweth the destruction of them both?*—R.V.

The word שונים (" those who change ") is doubtful, since the verb elsewhere takes an accusative. The main objection against the traditional text is that two classes of offenders are not indicated in the early part of the sentence, and " the destruction of them both " is therefore meaningless. The margin of the R.V. translates " the destruction of their years," which gives a poor sense. For this reason it is best to read שׂנְאֵיהֶם (" those who hate them "). This emendation gives the needful reference to two classes of offenders, the ungodly and the disloyal.

The LXX supports this emendation, since it apparently read " of them both " (*i.e.* שניהם) in both clauses. Thus the reading שונים would be due to a faulty emendation made by the editors of the M.T.

The deprecation of all change has pointed the moral of numberless political sermons, and this text has done untold harm by providing a convenient excuse for those who resist salutary changes. The true text gives better advice :

*My son, fear the Lord and the king ;*
*Meddle not with them that hate them ;*
*For their calamity shall arise suddenly ;*
*And who knoweth the destruction of them both ?*

PROVERBS XXIV. 23.

*These things also belong to the wise.*
*It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment.*
—A.V.

*These also are* (sayings) *of the wise.*
*To have respect of persons in judgment is not good.*—
R.V.

Heb. גם אלה לחכמים.

The editors, together with the R.V., have confidently assumed that the first line is an editorial note, and that it marks a new section of the book ; but, as Prof. Toy allows, " its contents nearly resemble in tone those of the preceding part of the section." This might be put yet more strongly, to the effect that, but for their supposed division, no one would have dreamt that there was any distinction between the verses that precede and that follow this supposed editorial note.

This interpretation of this line is open to a very serious objection. If it were, in fact, an editorial note, it would stand outside the proverbs, and would be followed by the customary doublet. It is, however, followed not by a doublet, but by a singlet :

*To have respect of persons in judgment is not good.*

The strong presumption is, therefore, that it is not an editorial note at all, but that it is the first half of the proverb, the second half being :

*To have respect of persons in judgment is not good,*

and that, consequently, the first line must be corrupt. Does this line contain any word liable to confusion with any other word ? Obviously it does, for the word אֵלֶּה, otherwise pointed, may stand for אָלָה, " a curse " ;

*cf.* Jer. ii. 34, "But upon thee is it for a curse," and possibly Jer. iv. 18, "Have brought a curse upon thee."

The only difficulty is found in the word גַּם ("also"), since if the emendation "a curse" is to be read, there must of necessity be a verb, and this verb must be somehow masked by the גַּם. In dealing with this difficulty, we shall have to combine a series of coincidences, which seem to have been hitherto overlooked, and which have been reserved for treatment till they could all be dealt with together. There are three separate passages in which this word occurs; and in all these passages it is apparently corrupt, while a single emendation will restore every passage to coherence.

The first of the passages is Prov. xvii. 26:

*Also to fine the righteous is not good,*
*Nor to smite the noble for their uprightness.*

The "also" makes no sense whatever, since the previous verse has no relation whatever to this verse, being

*A foolish son is a grief to his father,*
*And bitterness to her that bare him.*

The next passage to be considered is Prov. xix. 2, of which Prof. Hooke says, "The clause is defective, some verb expressing action is required":

*Also that the soul be without knowledge is not good,*
*And he that hasteth with his feet sinneth.*

Here again the "also" is meaningless—as is indeed the whole couplet; and once more comes the expression "is not good."

These three passages are evidently formed upon the same model, all three having a meaningless "also," and all three containing the words "is not good"; and, finally, not one of them having any sense as it stands.

Now the same emendation will restore all of them to a satisfactory condition. It has been already seen that

*mem* and *pe* are peculiarly liable to be mistaken. If *pe* then be written for *mem*, גם will become גף (*i.e.* גפ in MSS.), and גף is the infinitive of נגף ("smite" or "inflict penalty"); the *nun* disappearing before the *gimel*, by nasalisation.

Let this remedy be applied to the three passages, and they will appear as follows:

XVII. 26.

*To inflict a fine upon the righteous is not good,*
*Nor to smite the noble for their uprightness.*

XIX. 2.

*To smite a person without knowledge is not good,*
*And he that hasteth with his feet sinneth.*

A warning against over-hasty condemnation of others.

XXIV. 23.

*To smite the righteous with a curse,*
*To have respect of persons in judgment, is not good.*

All three passages have one form and one subject, the ill-treatment of the innocent, and in each case this offence is regarded as an injustice (is not good).

There is, however, yet another passage which confirms the conclusion drawn from these most remarkable coincidences, for in Prov. xiv. 13 occurs this strange sentence:

*Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful,*
*And the end of* (that) *mirth is heaviness.*—A.V.

The R.V. rightly omits the "that," but this omission makes the sentence out of harmony with the manly and cheerful outlook of the rest of the book.

Here also the same emendation will have the same good results, and the couplet will read:

*To smite in jest maketh the heart sad,*
*And the end of mirth is heaviness.*

The cumulative argument from these four passages reaches a very high level of probability. The treatment of literary questions must always be hazardous as long as the text of a book remains uncertain.

It should be mentioned that there is yet another instance of this emendation, which I came upon later; *cf.* my note on xviii. 9. Here the original reading was גַּף, the imperative of נגף.

PROVERBS XXIV. 27.

*Prepare thy work without,*
*And make it ready for thee in the field,*
*And afterwards build thine house.*—R.V.

This is inaccurate. The last line should be *afterwards and build.* This is nonsense, but it is the text. Through not adhering strictly to the text, the revisers have missed the clue to a very simple emendation which has the authority of the LXX πορεύου. Instead of לָךְ ("to thee") read לֵךְ ("go thou"). The conjunction "and" is then in its right place, and the sense is improved:

*Prepare thy work without,*
*And make it ready in the fields;*
*Go afterwards, and build thine house.*

PROVERBS XXV. 20.

*As one that taketh off a garment in cold weather,*
(And as) *vinegar upon nitre,*
*So is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart.*—R.V.

Both in form and in meaning this couplet is very suspicious. If the words in brackets are cut out the want of connexion is obvious; and even if their insertion be allowed, the comparison between "singing songs to a heavy heart" and "taking off a garment in cold weather" seems devoid of point. It is not, however, until the Hebrew text is closely examined that the difficulty is solved. The previous couplet in the

Hebrew (N.B.—This couplet has been needlessly reversed in translation), is :

A broken tooth, and a foot *out of joint,*
*Is confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble.*

A reference to the Hebrew still shows that " a garment in cold weather " is almost exactly like " an unfaithful man in time of trouble."

Evidently, therefore, the former of these sentences, as Dr. Toy has also seen, is a dittograph, and must be cut out.

For such a dittograph there needs a predisposing cause, for there must be a certain resemblance between a word in the one sentence and a word in the other sentence. The words which thus resemble each other are מועדת (" broken ") in the earlier sentence, and מעדה (trans. " taketh away ") in the latter sentence.

The second of these words needs emendation, since it gives no sense at all. It should certainly be מערה (" he that poureth "), the participle hiphil of the verb ערה (" to pour "), a verb which, as already remarked (*cf.* Prov. xxii. 11), hardly ever manages to escape maltreatment by the copyists.

At once the mystery is solved. " The garment in cold weather " disappears as a dittograph, and the couplet is as follows :

*As he that poureth vinegar upon nitre,*
*So is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart.*

PROVERBS XXV. 27.

*It is not good to eat much honey :*
*So* (for men) *to search out their own glory is* (not) *glory.*—A.V. and R.V.

Heb. (second line), וחקר כבדם כבוד.

It will be observed that both versions insert the word " not." Prof. Toy cannot find any connexion

between these two lines, and thinks that they have been brought together fortuitously, but he is in the habit of making this suggestion, and has done so with regard to several verses which have been explained, it is believed successfully, in previous pages. Some expositors translate: "The investigation of difficult things is glory," *i.e.* there may be a surfeit of honey, but there cannot be an excess of investigation (*cf.* Toy *in loc.*); but it is impossible to get this meaning from the Hebrew, and if it could be accomplished, the sense is far-fetched. Noyes translates "the search of high things is weariness," but this gives separate meanings to the two words translated in our versions as "glory." The LXX translates: "It is right to honour glorious sayings," which gives no meaning at all. Thus the passage has been given up as hopeless.

It is strange that no one seems hitherto to have suggested that there may have been the most obvious of all possible mistakes, a wrong division of the words, and that the sentence should be read: כבד מכבוד, *i.e.* "to search for honour in addition to honour." This gives the ordinary meaning of "dignity of position" to the word כבוד, and thus the verse is a warning against "vaulting ambition that o'er-leaps itself." The one difficulty is the use of the preposition מן to express what would in Greek be the meaning of *ἀντὶ*; *cf.* John i. 16, *χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος*. The use of the preposition מן is, however, very wide in its scope, and the Oxford Dictionary gives the meaning "in preference to," "above"; *cf.* Hos. vi. 6.

Thus there seems no insuperable objection against the use of the preposition in this sense. In favour of this emendation is its wonderful simplicity and its excellent sense. The parallelism between the results of a surfeit of honey and a surfeit of ambition is most emphatic.

PROVERBS XXVI. 10.

*The great* (God) *that formeth all things*
*Both rewardeth the fool and rewardeth transgressors.*—A.V.

(As) *an archer that woundeth all,*
*So is he that hireth the fool, and he that hireth them that pass by.*—R.V.

The International Critical Commentary gives fifteen lines of "the innumerable attempts" at translation and emendation, but says that "the text is in too bad a condition to permit a translation, and no satisfactory emendation has been suggested." Thus the ground is clear. It does not appear to have been noticed that the previous verse compares the fool (כסיל) and the drunkard (שכור), and that, as Toy remarks we have in the early part of this chapter "a book of fools." Thus it is obvious that the word usually translated either "rewarding" or "hiring" should stand for either drunkard or drunkenness: in fact it stands for both. It does not also appear to have been observed that in the first case in which this word appears it is prefaced by an "and," this evidently showing that it is the second of two nouns. But this is not the case in the text, for the word preceding is כל ("all"). Evidently, therefore, this word masks כסיל; thus there are two pairs of words in the sentence.

There is yet another error to be discovered, and it is to be found in מחולל ("formeth"). The experience of many confusions occurring between ח and ה suggests that the true word is מהלל ("boasteth"). Perhaps the misreading of "formeth" for "boasteth" was the primary cause which led to the dropping of the ם from כסיל, since it could hardly be said that the great God formed the fool.

Attention must now be directed to the very peculiar feature of the verse, viz. its pairs of similar words. We regard the first pair as adjectival, and the second pair

as abstract substantives, a matter of mere vocalisation. Then the verse will read :

*Much boasteth the fool, and the drunkard,*
*But drink and folly overmaster them.*

PROVERBS XXVII. 4.

*Wrath is cruel and anger is outrageous,*[1]
*But who is able to stand before jealousy?*—R.V.

This verse has apparently passed without exciting suspicion, and yet it must be confessed that the translation of " a flood " by the adjective " outrageous " seems at least unusual. But what is decisive against it is the excellent sense given by " flood," especially in connexion with the second line, which evidently describes an inundation against which it is impossible to keep one's footing. If then the translation " flood " be upheld, there is an excellent agreement with the second line, but there is, on the contrary, no sort of connexion with the sentence now rendered as " Wrath is cruel." Thus suspicion falls upon this sentence.

When the Hebrew is examined, attention is at once caught by the strange word, not elsewhere used, for " cruel." This is the noun אכזריות (" cruelty "), in place of the ordinary word אכזרי (" cruel ").

Let the final part of it be cut off, and it suggests the word רויה (" saturation " or " moisture "). This is encouraging.

What is left are the letters אכז. The א may be at once dismissed from notice as being a letter frequently added by scribes when in any difficulty. Many instances of this are given in other passages in Proverbs, and in the Psalms.

We are left with the two letters כז ; the change of כ to ב, and their reversal in order, will give זב (" an issue ") ; *cf.* Psalm lxxviii. 20, where the verb " to gush " is parallel to the verb " to be in flood," the word here used. Thus the passage becomes a crescendo, each

[1] Heb. *a flood.*

increasing manifestation of ill-temper being described by the metaphor of an increasing flow of water:

*Anger is a trickle of water,*
*Wrath is a flood,*
*But who can stand against jealousy?*

PROVERBS XXVII. 9.

*Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart;*
*So doth the sweetness of a man's friend* (that cometh) *of hearty counsel.*—R.V.

This passage was alluded to in the note on xxii. 11, where a reference to this verse suggested the reading מתק ("sweetness") for מלך ("king"). The debt is now to be repaid by the suggestion drawn from that verse that the word רעהו ("of a friend"), as found here, represents the word יערה ("is poured").

The second line of this couplet is quite intolerably dull and clumsy, and the insertion of "that cometh" is unwarranted.

The emendation suggested clears away this difficulty:

*Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart,*
*And sweetness is poured forth by hearty counsel.*

*i.e.* the counsel of heart with heart.

PROVERBS XXVII. 16.

*Whosoever hideth her, hideth the wind,*
*And the ointment of his right hand* (which) *bewrayeth itself.*—A.V.

*He that would restrain her restraineth the wind,*
*And his right hand encountereth oil.*—R.V.

LXX.

*The north wind is a bitter wind,*
*But by its name it is called well-omened.*

The previous verse deals with the contentious woman:

*A continual dropping on a very rainy day,*
*And a contentious woman are alike.*

The present verse explains this likeness, but the sense has been sadly missed, and the translations proposed are meaningless. Fortunately the true reading has left several valuable indications behind it and, as very often happens, a passage apparently hopeless is easier to reconstruct than one which is only slightly affected. The clue to the problem is found in the word ימינו, of which the literal translation is "his right hand." But it is a well-known fact that this word also means "the south." This discovery leads to another, viz. that the word rendered "hideth" means "north" (though the word which goes before it retains the sense "hideth"), for the LXX renders it as "Boreas."

So far there has been no need of any alteration in the text, but the reading of the LXX, "by the name of," makes it clear that this version read שם ("name"). This reading gives no sense as it stands, but it certainly implies an original reading גשם ("the rain").

Apparently, therefore, of the two like words, the M.T. dropped גשם, and the LXX dropped שמן ("fruitfulness," lit. "oil"). We are now able to render the passage as follows:

*The north wind storeth up the rain,*
*But a south wind inviteth fruitfulness.*

Thus the remedy against the contentious woman is gentleness. It should be mentioned that Sir G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geogr. of Holy Land*, pp. 66, 67, mentions the fact that the south wind rarely brings rain in Palestine.

PROVERBS XXVII. 21.

*The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold,*
*And a man* (is tried) *by his praise.*—R.V.

The best criticism of this translation is the marginal notes by which it is accompanied:

(1) By that which he praiseth.
(2) That whereof he boasteth.

These two suggestions, which are devoid of all probability, show that the translation given is a mere paraphrase.

What I would suggest is that the preposition ל which occurs before the words "silver" and "gold" should properly come before and not after the word "man."

This would give:

*The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold,*
*And for a man the mouth of him that praiseth him.*

This appears to have been the reading of the LXX, which renders, "But a man is tested by the mouth of those who praise him." The best argument for the change is the improvement made in the proverb. The praise is itself the test of a man's character.

PROVERBS XXVIII. 3.

*A needy man that oppresseth the poor,*
*Is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.*—R.V.

The oppression of the poor by one of their own number is, as Dr. Peake's Commentary points out, hardly in keeping with the conception of the poor either in Proverbs or in the O.T. generally. Previous emendations have not taken account of a *vav* (and) which precedes the verb "oppresseth." Now the scribes are always ready either to drop or insert a *vav* at their convenience, and probably were often right in so doing, since this letter was often left to the reader's discretion; but when, as here, it occurs where it is obviously not wanted, it may be presumed that it was present in the original. If so, its presence here implies that "oppresseth" was the second of two verbs.

I submit that the first of these verbs is concealed under the word גבר ("man"). This word is not used in its proper sense of "man as strong" (*cf.* Oxford Dict., p. 150). The frequent confusion between *resh* and *daleth* suggests that this mistake has occurred, and that the order of the consonants has been altered, in order to make sense of the meaningless collocation of

letters. Thus I regard the original reading as בגד (" deals treacherously," or " robs "). This suggestion alone explains the presence of the *vav*. A similar argument occurs in my note on xxvi. 10, where it is, I think, quite conclusive. Here, as there, the improvement in meaning is undoubted :

*He that robbeth the needy, and oppresseth the poor,*
*Is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.*

PROVERBS XXVIII. 17.

*A man that is laden with the blood of any person*
*Shall flee unto the pit ; let no man stay him.*—R.V.

The commentators generally assume that the crime mentioned is that of wilful murder, not the lesser crime of manslaughter, for which the cities of refuge were appointed. But surely in such a case no one would need to be forbidden to assist ! Natural indignation would not need a proverb to hold it to its duty. On the other hand, were the case one of manslaughter, it might be necessary to safeguard the provisions of the law which counselled mercy. Further, no one has been able to make any sense of " fleeing unto the pit," since if the place was one of punishment, why should the criminal flee to it ? and verse 10 of this very chapter, " he shall fall himself into his own pit," makes it clear that " the pit " cannot be used here as a place of refuge.

The Hebrew consonants rendered " to the pit " are עדבר. For this it is only necessary to read מדבר (" the wilderness "), and the whole thing becomes clear. What is intended is then, obviously, manslaughter, and the injunction is given that no one, merely because interested in the man who had been slain, should put an obstacle in the way of the escape of the slayer. This injunction is far more in harmony with the kindly spirit of the Book of Proverbs than the other, and very much more needful. The exact reading does not very much matter, *i.e.* whether we suppose that a syllable, מד, has been dropped out,

or, less probably, that there has been a confusion between *mem* and *'ayin*—since the sense is the same either way:

*A man that is laden with another's blood*
*Shall flee to the wilderness. Let none hinder him.*

PROVERBS XXVIII. 23.

*He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour*
*Than he that flattereth with his tongue.*—A.V.

R.V. *shall afterwards find.*

The Heb. (*cf.* Toy *in loc.*) has אחרי ("after me"). Most editors alter to אחר ("afterwards"), as does the R.V. in its translation "shall afterwards find." Toy says that the word "afterwards" is implied with the rest of the sentence, and looks upon it as a gloss. Oh these glosses!

The LXX reads ὁδοὺς, which points to the reading ארחו ("his way"). The verb "rebuke" may take acc. of person, or acc. of thing, and it does not seem impossible that it should take both. The support of the LXX is perhaps decisive for this emendation:

*He that reproveth a man for his way,*
*Shall find more favour than he that flattereth with his tongue.*

PROVERBS XXVIII. 28.

*When the wicked rise, men hide themselves:*
*But when they perish, the righteous increase.*

There are two objections against "men hide themselves." The first is that the translation is inaccurate; it should, of course, be "men are hidden"; since the verb is passive and not reflexive. It is no answer to reply that the accurate translation gives an inferior sense. The sense, and this is the second objection to the translation, is admittedly poor; "are hidden," and even "hide themselves," is no proper antithesis to "the

righteous increase." This points to the presence of corruption in the word יסתר (" are hidden "). It would be hazardous to conjecture the obvious emendation יכרת (" shall be cut off "), but for the fact, of which we have had so many examples, of the habitual confusion between *caph* and *samech*. This mistake having once been made, the alteration in the order of the consonants was inevitable. Both mistakes can now be rectified to the manifest improvement of the proverb:

*When the wicked rise, men are cut off,*
*But when they perish, the righteous are multiplied.*

PROVERBS XXIX. 9.

*If a wise man have a controversy with a foolish man,*
*Whether he be angry or laugh, there will be no rest.*—R.V.
or,
*He rageth or laugheth, and there is no rest.*—R.V.

This translation is the best that can be made out of the Hebrew text as it stands, but it cannot be pronounced satisfactory. It is not clear whether it is the wise man or the fool who rages and laughs. Dean Plumptre evidently supposes it to be the wise man, since he says: " You may rebuke him (*i.e.* the fool) sternly, or speak smilingly, still there is no rest. The ceaseless cavilling goes on still." Other commentators, with more probability, interpret the rage and the laughter of the fool; and certainly such conduct seems more appropriate to him than to the wise man. Anyhow, the proverb gives very poor sense, and one cannot see the reason for its introduction. It can hardly mean that the wise are never to argue with the foolish, and are to keep their wisdom under a bushel; but if it does not mean this, it means nothing. It should also be noticed that the parallelism is so weak as almost to be non-existent.

Two hints have been left which might have been expected to have put commentators upon the right explanation, which is by no means difficult. The LXX puts the foolish man into the second line, and Prof. Toy remarks with justice that the two words אֶת אִישׁ ("with a man") are not really needed before the word אֱוִיל ("a fool"). Taking these hints, we may keep "with a man" in the first line of the couplet, and put "the fool" into the second line. The *if* should be dropped, or, rather, should never have been inserted, for it is not in the text.

One thing more is needed, and that is a better meaning for the phrase now translated "hath a controversy with."

This verb is used of God *pleading* with Judah, Jer. ii. 35; Ezek. xvii. 20; xx. 35, 36; and it is also used in 1 Sam. xii. 7, of Samuel reasoning and pleading with the representatives of the nation. In all these cases the same preposition (אֶת) is used, which is used here, and in none of them is there any suggestion of severity, or of legal proceedings, as suggested by Toy's rendering, "A wise man hath a lawsuit with a fool." The word simply means to plead or reason.

Thus the translation of the present verse is simplicity itself:

*A wise man pleadeth with his neighbour* (lit. *with a man*),
*A fool rageth and scoffeth, and hath no rest.*

Here there is an excellent parallelism, which brings out the contrast between the conciliatory attitude of the wise man and the stormy bluster of the fool. This sense is gained without any alteration of the text, and merely by the transference of a word from the end of the first line to the beginning of the second line It carries on the meaning of the previous couplet:

*Scornful men set a city in a flame,*
*But wise men turn away wrath.*

PROVERBS XXX. 4.

*What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou knowest?*—R.V.

The older commentators regarded this as a reference to the Trinity, but, as Prof. Hooke justly remarks, "What is his name?" cannot refer to God. It is, as he says, a sarcastic inquiry after the name of the man who has ascended to heaven, and ruled the universe. But, if so, there seems no meaning at all in the inquiry after the name of his son. Hence the reading must be regarded as doubtful. The Hebrew of "What is his son's name?" is: מה שם בנו. This, with the smallest possible alteration, should be read as: מה משכנו, *i.e.* "What is his dwelling?"

PROVERBS XXX. 29–31.

*There be three things which are stately in their march,*
*Yea, four which are stately in going:*
*The lion which is mightiest among beasts,*
*And turneth not away for any;*
*The greyhound, the he-goat also,*
*And the king, against whom there is no rising up.*[1]—R.V.

The last line is certainly corrupt. What is needed is a fourth animal which is stately in going. Only thus does this series of four things agree with the series of four things immediately preceding it—the ants, conies, locusts, and spiders, which are all renowned for their wisdom. The first series evidently shows man that the lower creation surpasses him in wisdom. In the second series man learns the superior grace and dignity of the lower creation, but this lesson is wholly spoilt by the inclusion in it of the king, which renders both series valueless as moral reflections. So much for a general view of the passage.

When we come to the Hebrew of the last line, the

[1] Or, *when his army is with him.*

moral objection is reinforced by the very unsatisfactory condition of the text.

The word אלקום is not elsewhere found. The translation "against whom there is no rising" is impossible. Some editors render "a band of soldiers," and others venture to suggest "a king, God with him."

The emendation given on vii. 23 suggests that אל represents איל ("a stag"). The translation given by the LXX, *ἡγούμενος αἰπολίου* ("leader of the herd"), supports this suggestion. The second syllable remains unaltered, being a participle or hiphil indicative of קום ("to rise"). There is only one word left to be discussed, viz. עמו. This is, in fact, the only emendation. For this we must read פעמיו ("its steps"). Probably the *pe* was read as a *mem*, and thought to be a dittograph of the previous letter, and was thus omitted.

The translation will be:

*And a king stag that raiseth high its steps.*

The phrase "a king stag" is still used by country people for the leader of the herd. The copyist naturally supposed that "king" referred to a monarch, and did not think of "the monarch of the glen." I am told that when a stag leads the herd of females he shows off his paces, but however this may be, the stag is worthy of the honour of completing the number of animals goodly in their going.

## Proverbs XXXI. 3, 4.

*Give not thy strength unto women,*
*Nor thy ways unto that which destroyeth*[1] *kings.*
*It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine,*
*Nor for princes* (to say) *where is strong drink.*—R.V.

There are serious difficulties here. The word translated "kings," in the second line, is not the same as

[1] Or, *them that destroy.*

that rightly rendered " kings " twice over in the line following (מלכים), but is מלכין. It is obviously impossible that there should be this difference, and equally obvious that this word, which is Aramaic, must be incorrect. We are entitled to suppose that the original reading was like the word " kings " and was attracted into that word, but not entirely, as the copyist did not think it allowable to alter the *nun*. This greatly limits the area of emendation, for there are few Hebrew words of the required form ending in *nun*. I suggest למבין (*i.e.* " even the wise man ").

This word occurs in several passages in Proverbs, and meets all requirements.

The last line is also doubtful. The word rendered " where " (או) means usually " or " or " whether," but cannot be so translated here, as coming after " princes." It can only be suggested that it stands for יארי (" rivers of ").

With these emendations the translation will be :

*Give not thy strength unto women,*
*Nor thy ways unto that which destroyeth even the wise man.*
*It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine,*
*Nor for princes to drink rivers of strong drink.*

# PART II

## PSALMS

## CHAPTER V

### PREFACE TO THE CRITICISM OF THE PSALMS

In endeavouring to revise the text of the Psalms one is naturally exposed to criticism from many who love every phrase and cadence of words familiarised by hallowed associations of worship and of spiritual experience. It may quite conceivably be said: "You may mend the Book of Proverbs to your heart's content, and we shall offer no objection, but leave us our Psalms in their integrity."

Hence it seems advisable that, just at this stage of my work, I should try to show that if there is something to be lost there is more to be gained by cautious revision, and indeed that we are under a special obligation to deal with any particular book of the Old Testament in the exact proportion in which it has been incorporated in Christian worship. Yet more serious opposition is likely to be raised by those pious readers who have never faced the facts which make revision necessary not merely of a translation, but of the text from which that translation was made. In stating these facts I am glad to be in a position to quote from the pages of a writer far removed from modern controversy.

Some months ago I was the fortunate recipient of an old book entitled *Psalmorum Liber*, given me under somewhat peculiar circumstances. The son of an honoured predecessor of my own as Vicar of Castlechurch was clearing out his library, when he came upon this book, and thinking it would be of interest, kindly sent it me. Apparently it had come down straight from the author, Francis Hare, D.D.,

sometime Bishop of Chichester, for it was the copy belonging to the Bishop's own son. It bears the date A.D. 1736, and is of the highest value, for though he was far too much inclined to suppose a likeness between Classical and Biblical poetry, for which mistake he was soundly trounced by Lowth and Bentley, the Bishop's views on textual criticism are in advance of his own, and perhaps of any other time. I am glad to have been able to insert a certain number of his actual emendations. It is, however, in regard to his attitude towards Biblical criticism that I desire to rely upon his authority, and, first of all, to take as my own his delightful apology for writing on so difficult a topic.

"That you may learn, dear Reader, with what object, though occupied with very different aims, I betook myself to prepare this Edition of the Psalms, I will briefly mention that I entered upon this kind of labour, with the sole aim of restoring by my own efforts, should I be able, the body of ancient Hebrew poetry, now for more than two thousand years in suspended animation. And if my attempt succeeded as I could wish, I felt that I should not merely do something of great advantage to the furtherance of Divinity, but also that I should bestow a great boon upon scholarship in general. I know very well that the attempt will appear to the learned as not merely laborious and difficult, but that it is almost universally regarded as a thing impossible, and that an exact knowledge of this poetry has been regarded by all the most learned scholars as involved in such obscurity that it is beyond human industry to shed light upon it. Their opinion gains no little weight from the unhappy attempts of those who, unwilling to surrender the hope of success, have manfully entered upon this investigation, and have spent much effort upon it, yet without any result.

"This consideration might well have served to deter scholars of eminent learning and talents, much more a man of little learning, and great diffidence, as I

willingly profess myself to be of, and indeed it long deterred me. I feared to differ from so many eminent scholars, and thought it as hopeless as any one could think it to spend all my power in the restoration of Hebrew poetry; and I had not the smallest intention of devoting my studies to a subject in which all others had met with so scanty a success; until a certain event, now some years back, caused me to turn my mind to this pursuit with more attention. And that you may know what this event was, I will tell you; my new purpose came from a casual conversation with a friend."

I gladly associate myself, having, I fear, better reason, with the good Bishop's disclaimer of sufficient scholarship, and with his actual excuse. I may mention that in my case "the friend" was the late Rev. H. J. Huffadine, and that during our study of Hosea, some ten years ago, he suggested an emendation, so obviously correct, that it led me not only to revise the text of that very corrupt book, but was the lineal progenitor of the present volume and of the emendations therein contained.

I will now pass to Bishop Hare's somewhat drastic condemnation of the methods of study commonly applied to the Hebrew text, and to his considered verdict of the condition of that text. Very much of what he has said is equally true to-day.

"The traditional doctrine of accents, and of the variation of vowel points, is, with a few exceptions, nothing else than the pedantry of scholars, the misuse of talent and leisure, and the vain effort to arrest the decay of language; and it has never occurred to any one else to elaborate similar refinements in the study of any other tongue. Certainly we make no progress in understanding Hebrew by wading through all this rubbish, nor by the study of these complicated notes, for such learning is no longer of any value; for we do not learn Hebrew in order to speak or write it, but in order to understand what is written in Hebrew. Nor is there any reason to think that the most careful

knowledge of these rules would enable any one to arrive at the true ancient pronunciation; for sounds cannot be preserved without alteration through the centuries. It were to be desired that all this rubbish should be removed from modern gramamrs, that only excepted which is needed for actual reading, in order that the elements of Hebrew might be simplified, which are now enough to frighten beginners by the very look of them.

"I am not unaware that I, and others who think as I do, will incur the blame of many persons, as undermining the authority of Holy Writ, and as accusing God of want of care for the preservation of the Hebrew text. But how can such a charge be brought against the very best and most learned scholars? Nothing is more true than that the sacred text, just as all other ancient books, has suffered loss in transmission both from the carelessness and ignorance of scribes, and from other causes; and that this one text could not have been preserved in its perfection without some stupendous and incredible miracle, since all other texts have similarly suffered. Certainly if any one considers that the Scriptures are of all books the most ancient, he will hardly wonder that they have not escaped even greater injury, not merely from the scribes, but from their age. But if in addition to this we call to mind the sad lot of the Jewish people and how often they suffered dire calamities,—and how the manuscripts of the sacred text were sacrilegiously torn and burnt, who, I say, seriously recalls this to mind, and the fact that the study of well nigh all literature was at all times much neglected among the Jewish people, will not so much wonder that the sacred text has in many passages suffered considerable harm, as that, after so many perils, it has come down to us as perfect as it is. For most of the imperfections are of such a kind as not to threaten true religion, nor to detract from the authority of the sacred text.

"Here let me merely say that I have always been of

opinion that it will never be well with Holy Writ, and that its interpreters will never win the same renown in its study and explanation as in the editing and illustrating of all other ancient writings, until they freely employ the same critical expedients, the same accurate judgement, and the same freedom from prejudice. For what sufficient reason can be given why those great and eminent scholars, who have done such wonderful work in editing the classics, and have happily restored so many passages to their original beauty and perfection by this diligence, have yet attained no such excellence, gained no such success, and won no similar fame in dealing with Holy Writ; unless it is because in dealing with the former they were free agents acting freely, were ready to adopt rational criticism, swayed by no party, and hindered by no prejudice, but put their personal opinions openly and clearly before their readers. But in dealing with the latter they seem to have discarded all freedom of judgement, as though they were no longer their own masters, but slaves of the parties to which they belonged. Whence it has come to pass . . . that most commentators have not even thought of removing blemishes, but have been entirely engaged in hiding, cherishing and canonizing them. They give no attention to improving a bad reading by some insignificant emendation, but as though they were dealing with an accredited reading, whatever it may happen to be, they evolve some sort of sense, and, by means of difficult and forced interpretations, in defiance of criticism and grammar, wring it out as it were by main force.

"I on the contrary in the preparation of this work have decided that I must tread another path, and that I would employ all the resources of criticism, and, just as if engaged upon any other text, have entirely dismissed all preconceptions of whatever character especially those relating to the divine inspiration of vowel points and to the absolute integrity of the sacred text, too readily accepted by our ancestors from their

Jewish instructors—for it is as clear as daylight that if similar opinions with regard to the other writings of antiquity had prevailed among the learned, classical scholarship would not stand in the position in which it stands to-day."

In dealing with the plea of religious unsettlement as urged by some Christians, the Bishop speaks as follows :

"It is vain to object that everything in Holy Writ is rendered doubtful and uncertain, or that no confidence can be reposed in a corrupt and faulty text ; for by this kind of argument all confidence would be taken from all ancient literature whether of Greece or of Rome, since the condition of practically all of them is such that these kind of errors have crept into them almost beyond sober belief.

"But to approach this matter more closely, why deny that, in regard to the Old Testament, which is freely allowed with regard to the New Testament, that many various readings have from time to time crept into its MSS. For all the various readings, save one, are so many errors. And yet is any one so rash as to contend that all confidence must be withdrawn from the New Testament, because it contains an almost infinite number of various readings, the amount of which increases daily, as often as a new MS., which had not previously come into the hands of scholars, is investigated and compared with those already printed. By what criterion can it be known out of so many readings what readings are true ? And if such a criterion was arrived at, even that would not remove all the errors, for some are more ancient than all existent MSS., and there is still room for learned conjecture. Thus no credence can be given to the argument that, if error has here and there crept in, everywhere and anywhere any one may make what corrections and emendations he may please. For what follows from this ? A scribe may here and there fail, and make a mistake. It is not enough that the error should be

blamed, it must be proved to be an error, and if it be really an error, it can be shown to be such, and if it be not an error, it cannot be proved such. On the other hand it will be possible to prove that it is no error at all, for truth can never conflict with truth, and till error has been proved there is no reason for suspicion."

All that remains is to compare the opinions of this old Bishop, so far in advance of his own, and indeed of quite recent times, with the latest modern thought, as it has been expressed by our most accomplished orientalist, Prof. D. S. Margoliouth.

What is his view of the authority of the Masoretic text? He considers first of all that Biblical Hebrew was a dead language at the time of the LXX Version, which he dates somewhere in the neighbourhood of 300 B.C. He remarks that

"A book of the Old Testament presented to a Jew of the year 300 B.C., or thereabouts, much the same appearance as it presents to one of us. It is in a dead language. Many verses we are inclined to give up altogether; too little is known of their meaning to allow any chance of a satisfactory conjecture." [1]

If this was the fact in 300 B.C., it is obvious that it must have been yet more the case at the time of the Masoretic recension.

"The earliest Jewish writers whose works we possess are well aware that the vocalisation of the Old Testament is a recent achievement. That it is in the main correct need not be doubted, but the nuances and minutiæ which it displays can have no scientific value. The exact colouring of a vowel is not transmitted with accuracy for a period of 1,000 years.

"The process of recording the pronunciation of itself introduced Othman's theory of literal and consonantal inspiration. In the Talmud this theory does not ordinarily appear. On the contrary, the Rabbis correct the text with great licence and extreme infelicity.

[1] *Defence of Biblical Interpretation*, p. 25.

We are not entitled to regard their corrections as meant otherwise than seriously." [1]

What follows from these statements of Dr. Margoliouth, which by the way strangely agree with those of Bishop Hare, is that the traditional text as settled by the Masoretes cannot be regarded as authoritative, and that its needful revision has been mainly delayed on the ground of its supposed accuracy, and even infallibility.

Now comes the question as to whether it is still possible (and if possible, it is surely obligatory) to endeavour to place the text on a sound footing.

Dr. Margoliouth (p. 118) is of opinion that

" The correction of the text in the case of Hebrew writers is an operation which is very unlikely to lead to satisfactory results : it is only in rare cases that such a proceeding is dictated by the canons of science."

I trust that this view may be modified—for we stand in no worse, but I believe in a far better, position than the Masoretes of, say A.D. 850. We can regard their text as practically ascertained by the arduous labours of the collators of MSS. Further, we have, what the Masoretes had not, exhaustively compiled dictionaries.

The one thing needed, as Dr. Margoliouth sees, is a scientific basis of emendation. The present series of Critical Studies marks the attempt to supply such a foundation. The causes of error are assumed to be inherent in the Hebrew script. This assumption is progressively verified by a long series of emendations, covering three of the most important books of the Old Testament. Individual emendations are of course various in value, but I am contending not for these but for a method, regarded as scientific—and I may hope my readers may be able to endorse the verdict of Prof. Jaeger—" I am still admiring the surprising results of your method. Evidently among the number of emendations which you propose all are not of the same evidence, but your suggestions are never worthless."

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 225.

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# CHAPTER VI

## THE FIRST BOOK OF PSALMS

### Psalms I.—XLI.

It should be noted that the numbering of the verses follows that of the Hebrew. Owing to the inclusion of the titles of the psalms in that text, the number of any particular verse should in most cases be reduced by one, in order to correspond with the English numbering, which, when it differs, is added in brackets.

It may be mentioned that it is not contemplated in the present volume to refer to emendations made by others, and the fact that such emendations are not referred to must not be understood to imply either acceptance or rejection. When they are referred to it is only because something has to be added which seems to bear upon their probability. The emendations mentioned in Dr. Ginsburg's Edition should be considered by the student, since some of them at least are of value.

### Psalm II. 12.

*Kiss the son,*[1] *lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way.*—R.V.

The word בר has the meaning of son only in the Syriac or Aramaic. The Syriac alone of the older versions gives this rendering. That of the LXX

[1] Some ancient versions render *Lay hold of* or *receive instructions*, others, *worship in purity.*

"receive instructions," seems to be a mere paraphrase. The rendering "in purity" shows that בר was read, and was referred to a verb meaning "to be pure," but this translation is without probability. All that can be said is that the letters ב and ר either form, or mask, the true reading. Of the two letters the *resh* is the one most liable to suspicion. It is likely that it stands for an original *daleth*, and that, with the proper vowels added, the real word was ביד ("with," or "on the hand"). Thus the meaning would be either "Kiss the hand" (of the King), or "Kiss the hand" (to the King). For the latter sense, *cf.* Job xxxi. 27, "My mouth hath kissed my hand." This suggestion gives a good sense, and the alteration is absolutely microscopic.

PSALM VII. 8 (7).

*And let the congregation of the peoples compass thee about,*
*And over them return thou on high.*—R.V.

It is not easy to gain a connected sense from these lines. A simple alteration will make everything clear, viz. that אלהים ("angels") should be read *vice* לאמים ("peoples"). What is being described is a theophany; God accompanied by a cloud of thronging angels appears to vindicate the psalmist, and, after pronouncing judgment, returns to heaven at the head of his train of angels. If this suggestion be correct, the alteration of the text was probably due to the tendency, elsewhere noted by editors, to obliterate from the text any supposed reference to a plurality of divine beings in the interests of a higher monotheism. Translate:

*And let the company of angels compass thee about,*
*And above it return thou on high.*

PSALM IX. 7 (6).

*The enemy are come to an end, they are desolate for ever;*
*And the cities thou hast overthrown,*
*Their very memorial is perished.*—R.V.

The R.V. gives what is in fact merely a paraphrase: the literal translation being, "The enemy (*sing.*) are come to an end, desolations for ever." The collective use of the singular "enemy" with a plural verb, while not impossible, is not very likely, but when combined with the anacoluthon "desolations for ever" it becomes very doubtful. A knowledge of the methods of the scribes makes it likely that, here as in many other passages, an *aleph* has been added, and that instead of האוב תמו, what was originally written was היו בתימו ("their houses have become"). Thus the mistake was due to a wrong division of consonants, which was sought to be remedied by the introduction of the *aleph*. But this remedy did not remove the difficulty, and, as so frequently, the present condition of the text indicates unskilful handling on the part of some early scribe.

The verse is now greatly improved. No fresh nominative is needed. The whole passage runs straight on:

*Thou hast rebuked the peoples, thou hast destroyed the wicked,*
*Thou hast blotted out their names for ever and ever:*
*Their houses have become perpetual desolations,*
*And the cities thou hast destroyed,*
*Their very remembrance hath perished.*

N.B. the sequence, names, houses, cities.

PSALM IX. 12, 13 (11, 12).

*Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion:*
*Declare among the people His doings.*
*For he that maketh inquisition for blood remembereth them:*
*He forgetteth not the cry of the poor.*—R.V.

The revisers give the alternative "peoples" in the margin. Their marginal reading is obviously right, and

their translation in the text is wrong. Their reason seems to have been that the remembrance mentioned, which the parallelism shows to be one of mercy, was not likely to be extended to other nations. The parallelism of the last two lines is also weak, and the passage appears to be corrupt. What was said in a previous passage with regard to the frequent insertion of *aleph* by the copyists gives the needed clue. The word אותם (" them ") should be read as יתום (" the orphan "). Now in Psalm x., which is rightly regarded by the editors as very closely connected with the present psalm, the word " orphan " occurs twice over, *cf.* verses 14 and 18 ; and there, as here, the word is in the singular. This suggestion removes the difficulty, and gives an excellent parallelism :

*For he that maketh inquisition for blood remembereth the orphan,*
*He forgetteth not the cry of the poor.*

Thus both lines convey a threat to the heathen oppressors.

PSALM X. 3, 4.

*For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire,*
*And the covetous renounceth,* (yea), *contemneth the Lord.*
*The wicked in the pride of his countenance* (saith), *He will not require it,*
*All his thoughts are, There is no God.*—R.V.

The interpolation of " yea " and " saith " is unwarranted, and the sense of the last line is hardly possible. This points to the presence of some corruption in the text. In the second line the word נרך (" renounceth ") should probably be read נרך (" against the oppressed "). This word occurs in verse 18, and probably also in verses 10 and 12.

In the last line all that is necessary is to read און (" evil ") instead of אין (" there is no "), and to suppose

that owing to this mistake, the word "God" was put out of its natural place as the object of the verb "seek." With these slight alterations the passage will read as follows:

*For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire,*
*And the oppressor of the poor contemneth the Lord.*
*The wicked in the pride of his countenance will not seek God,*
*All his thoughts are evil.*

Thus the passage shows the connexion between immorality and irreligion.

PSALM X. 6.

*He saith in his heart, I shall not be moved:*
*To all generations I shall not be in adversity.*—R.V.

The Revised Version, following the example of the LXX, here omits to take any notice of a very inconvenient *which:*

*To all generations which shall not be in adversity.*

Some commentators join the relative to the words immediately preceding it, *i.e.* "through generations which are free from evil"; others regard it as a conjunction, "inasmuch as" or "because," but if it could mean this (which is very doubtful) it ought certainly to stand at the beginning of the line.

All that is needed is a different vocalisation, and no change is necessary in the consonantal text. Thus instead of the pronoun אשר, read אשרי ("my goings"), a word occurring in Psalm xvii. 5, "Hold thou up my goings," and in other psalms. The word has almost, if not quite, dropped any metaphorical sense, and means simply "my life":

*From generation to generation my life shall not be in adversity.*

PSALM X. 10.

*He croucheth,*[1] *he boweth down,*
*And the helpless* [2] *fall by his strong ones.*—R.V.

The reading of the text is ודכה=ידכה according to the K'ri. But, as Dr. Perowne observes, there is no proof that the verb ever has the meaning of crouching. Others translate, "And being crushed he sinketh down." Perowne translates, without much probability:

*So he is crushed, sinks down, and falls,*
*The helpless (perish) by means of his strength.*

None of these translations gives a really forcible sense, and the passage is probably corrupt.

What I suggest is ודך יחשה ("and the oppressed is silent").

The word דך occurs elsewhere in the psalm, as has been already pointed out, and the confusion between ח and ה (*cheth* and *he*) is so frequent and easy, that the change can hardly be considered an emendation at all. The meaning is, "The oppressed is unresisting," lit. "silent" or "inactive"; *cf.* Psalm xxxix. 3, "I was silent from good words."

In the next line we accept the explanation of "strong ones" given by Ewald, Delitzsch, Cheyne, Bacon, and others, *i.e.* "claws"; but read the word in the construct plural. For חלכאים, a very doubtful word, we suggest הלבאים ("the lions") an emendation which carries on the idea suggested by "claws."

The verse will now read:

*The oppressed is unresisting,*
*And falleth into the claws of the lions.*

PSALM X. 12.

*Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up Thine hand:*
*Forget not the poor.*—R.V.

This verse is singularly weak: the conjunction of Jahveh and El, the two names of God, is most unusual;

[1] Another reading is, *And being crushed.* [2] Or, *hapless.*

and there is a total absence of parallelism. It is not suggested that there is anything wrong in the consonantal text, but only in the vocalisation of the last three words in the first line, which will then read as follows :

*Arise, O Lord, let not the oppressed be disregarded ;*
*Forget not the poor.*

*i.e.* וְאַל יִנָּשֵׂא דָךְ instead of אַל נִשָּׂא יָדֶךָ.

PSALM XII. 7 (6).

*The words of the Lord are pure words ;*
*As silver tried in a furnace on the earth.*—R.V.

The A.V. " of earth " made sense, but was not a translation of the Hebrew ; while the R.V. translates the Hebrew, but does not make sense. All furnaces, and most other things, are on the earth. The obvious emendation is to read אוצר (" treasury ") written defectively as אצר, and thus not recognised by the scribe, who took the ready method of transposing the consonants into the familiar word אֶרֶץ (" earth ").

" Silver purified in a furnace for the treasury " would, of course, be more thoroughly refined than any other silver. Hence this emendation gives an added force to the sentence, and an added beauty to the comparison.

PSALM XVI. 2, 3.

*I have said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord :*
*I have no good beyond Thee.*
*As for the saints that are in the earth,*
*They are the excellent in whom is all my delight.*—R.V.

This translation is doubtless the best that can be obtained from the text as it stands, but it is very far from being satisfactory.

The first two lines may be dismissed shortly. With the great mass of editors we read, "I have said," *vice* the text which gives second person fem. In place of "not," read "all," since the translation "beyond" is very doubtful. This emendation was arrived at independently, but it has been anticipated by previous writers. It gives a very simple sense:

*I have said unto Jahveh, Thou art my Lord,*
*My good resteth wholly upon Thee.*

It is now possible to pass to the second verse, which is one of the greatest difficulty. There can be little doubt of the presence of corruption. The meaning given to the preposition ל "as concerning" is doubtful. The word translated "excellent" is really in the construct case, and should be rendered "the excellent of"—which gives no sense at all. Even granted the possibility of translation, the resultant sense is very weak. It is a sure sign of corruption when poverty of meaning is combined with suspicious grammar.

Restoration begins with the word המה ("they"). There are constant confusions between ה and ח, and between מ and פ. Both confusions seem to have been made here. Hence חפה ("a defence") is suggested instead of המה ("they"). The opposite mistake seems to have been made in Isaiah iv. 3, "Upon all the glory shall be a defence."

The next word to be remedied is אדירי ("excellent"). Here we have the help of the LXX, *ἐθαυμάστωσε*, and read יאדיר ("he magnifieth"); *cf.* Isaiah xlii. 21.

The passage will then run as follows:

*To the saints which are upon earth He is a defence,*
*And He magnifieth all His love upon them.*

This reconstruction is effected by the minimum of change: it keeps closely to the LXX, and gives an admirable meaning to the whole verse.

PSALM XXII. 17 (16).

*They pierced my hands and my feet.*—R.V.

This apparently simple line has given rise to greater controversy than almost any text in the Bible. This controversy might have been avoided had it been realised that the text is certainly corrupt. The MSS. read כארי (" like a lion "), the versions mainly read כארו (? " they digged "), though no such verb is known to exist. There is indeed a verb כרה (" dig " or " bore "), but there is no evidence to show that this verb was ever written with a medial *aleph*. This irregularity points to the presence of some corruption in the text.

This supposition is borne out by the supposed meaning. The punishment of crucifixion was a Roman custom, and piercing the hands and feet was in no sense likely to have been done to the Psalmist by his enemies. As previously remarked, when irregular grammar is combined with unusual meaning, the evidence of corruption is cumulative.

Assuming the presence of corruption, the text must now be critically examined. It may be considered certain that the transmitted text contained the letters כארו, the י being frequently a miswritten ו.

There are many instances of confusion between *caph* and *samech*, and of the consequent mutation in the consonantal order, hence I suggest that the original text read אסרו (" they bound "). This is endorsed by several versions, *e.g.* Jerome reads *vinxerunt*. Abraham of Zante evidently had both readings before him, since he renders

*Yea, like a lion they bound my hands and my feet.*

When graphical probability goes with strong versional evidence the result is moral certainty. Hence the true reading of this vexed passage must be :

*They bound my hands and my feet.*

PSALM XXVII. 8.

(When thou saidst), *Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee,*
*Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*—R.V.

This is paraphase, not translation. The words "When thou saidst" are added by the translators, not to mention that "seek ye my face" is transferred from the end of the line to the beginning! Dr. Perowne is more accurate, since he renders:

*To Thee hath my heart said, Seek ye my face,*
*Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*

He explains "Seek ye my face" as a quotation of the words of God, which he supposes to be placed on the lips of the worshipper. Surely this is quite impossible!

No alteration is needed—and the words must be taken in their natural order. All difficulty vanishes when "my heart" is taken as the vocative, when the translation will of course be:

*To thee, O my heart, He saith, Seek ye my face;*
*Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*

Religion is a conversation—God speaks to the heart, and the heart replies to God. It is strange that so simple a rendering should have been missed.

PSALM XXVII. 12–14.

*Deliver me not over unto the will of mine adversaries:*
*For false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.*
(I had fainted) *unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord*
*In the land of the living.*
*Wait on the Lord:*
*Be strong, and let thine heart take courage;*
*Yea, wait thou on the Lord.*—R.V.

It is necessary to write out this passage *in extenso*, in order that it may be seen to be defective both in its sense and rhythm. The insertion of the sentence "I

had fainted" seems entirely unwarranted, though some such phrase is necessary, if the passage is to be translated as it stands in the Hebrew text. The editors explain the construction as an instance of aposiopesis, *i.e.* a sudden interruption of the sequence—and Dr. Perowne translates:

*Oh did I not believe to see the goodness of Jehovah*
*In the land of the living! . . .*

The Oxford Dictionary explains the construction in the same way, and translates:

*If I had not believed . . .!*

Such explanations seem very far-fetched, and it seems much better to suppose that the text is corrupt, than to force it into a semblance of meaning by such drastic methods.

The restoration of this passage is by no means difficult. The word translated "unless" (Heb. לולא) was evidently under suspicion from a very early date, being written with dots both above and below it. All that is necessary is to alter the *vav* into a *yod*. Then לי ("against me") goes with the previous line, and לא, the simple negative, with the line as it stands. The translation will then be as follows:

*For false witnesses are risen up against me,*
*And he that uttereth violence against me;*
*I believed not that I should see*
*The goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.*

This rendering is confirmed by Isaiah xxxviii. 11, "I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living."

PSALM XXX. 6 (5).

*For His anger is but for a moment;*
*In His favour is life.*—R.V.

*His favour is for a life time.*—R.V. mg.

The text gives an imperfect parallelism—the marginal reading can hardly be got out of the Hebrew. It may be suggested that the *vav* at the end of the

previous word has either taken the place of the *resh*, or that a *resh* has been dropped, because of its likeness to a *vav*. The two letters are very much alike, ו *vav* and ר *resh*. If this mistake was made חם would appear in the text, *vice* רחם, *i.e.* ירחם (" He is merciful ").

The two words " favour " and " mercy " occur together in Isaiah lx. 10, " In my favour I have had mercy."

If this emendation be allowed, the translation will be :

*For His anger is but for a moment ;*
*In His favour He hath mercy.*

This gives a transition from wrath to mercy, and explains the next couplet :

*Weeping may tarry for the night,*
*But joy cometh in the morning.*

PSALM XXX. 8 (7).

*Thou, Lord, of Thy favour hadst made my mountain to stand strong.*—R.V.

The literal translation of this line is as follows : " Thou . . . didst make strength to stand for my mountain." What is meant by " my mountain " ? The inscription at the head of the psalm seems to imply that Zion is intended, since it speaks of the psalm as " a psalm written at the dedication of the house," but the theme of the psalm is personal, and it is evidently a thanksgiving for recovery from sickness.

The LXX has a variant, and in place of הררי (" my mountain ") evidently read הדרי (" my honour "). There is the same confusion between these two very similar words in Psalm cx. 3. Taking this reading as probably correct, it would seem best to read לי הדר ועז. *Cf.* Prov. xxxi. 24, " Strength and honour are her clothing."

The translation of the line would thus be :

*Thou hast confirmed me in honour and strength.*

This seems an improvement.

PSALM XXXI. 12 (11).

*Because of all mine adversaries I am become a reproach,*
*Yea, unto my neighbours exceedingly, and a fear to*
*mine acquaintance.*—R.V.

The word rendered "exceedingly" reads, as Dr. Perowne says, "very lamely," and the parallelism is defective. What is of course needed is a word similar in sense to "fear," but it is essential that this word should be capable of being confused with the word rendered "exceedingly," *i.e.* מאד. No suggestion can be considered satisfactory unless it exhibits this resemblance. Now in Deut. xi. 25, "The fear of you, and the dread of you," the word מורא ("fear") occurs, accompanied by precisely the same word פחד ("dread"), which is used in the second member of the present verse. Assuming that מורא was written defectively as מרא, and that, as so often happens, *resh* was confused with *daleth*, the scribe would be faced with מרא, which he naturally read as מאד ("exceedingly"). The mistake was made early, as the LXX renders *σφόδρα* ("exceedingly").

The translation will then be:

*Because of all my adversaries I am become a reproach,*
*A fear unto my neighbours, and a dread unto mine*
*acquaintance.*

PSALM XXXV. 7, 8.

*For without cause have they hid for me their net in*
*a pit,*
*Without cause have they digged* (a pit) *for my soul.*
*Let destruction come upon him at unawares;*
*And let his net that he hath hid catch himself,*
*Into that very destruction let him fall.*—R.V. and
R.V. mg.

The revisers are really rather irritating; they are so ready to interpolate words of their own into the text, without any real justification, and so slow to see that

the copyists have made the kind of mistakes that most of us so often commit in transcribing. Here they have inserted an "in" in line one, and "a pit" in line two. Now the word "pit" is not wanted in line one, and is urgently needed in line two. Therefore it has obviously been misplaced. It is also wanted in the last line. With these simple emendations the passage at once becomes clear and well balanced:

*For without cause have they hid for me their net;*
*Without cause have they digged a pit for my soul.*
*Let destruction come upon him at unawares,*
*And let his net that he hath hid catch himself,*
*And let him fall into his own pit.*

PSALM XXXV. 12.

*They reward me evil for good,*
(To) *the bereaving of my soul.*—R.V.

The word שכול seems singularly inappropriate, and is condemned by most editors. It is at least possible that we should read יכשילו, *i.e.* "They cause my soul to stumble." The mistake would thus be the careless inversion of the order of two consonants.

PSALM XXXV. 16 (15, 16).

*The abjects gathered themselves together against me,*
*and I knew it not;*
*They did tear me, and ceased not:*
*Like the profane mockers in feasts,*
*They gnashed upon me with their teeth.*—R.V.

The third line, if it has any meaning at all, is literally "with the profane mockers of a cake." The word מעוג ("a cake") is only found in 1 Kings xvii. 2, "I have not a cake." It is much more probable that it has been introduced owing to the misreading of a consonant. What is evidently needed is a verb in the indicative, followed by an infinitive of purpose, "to gnash upon me," which is the true translation of the text.

Taking the consonants of מעו, the *mem* may conceal a *pe*. This suggests that the original word may have been פגעו ("they attacked"). The alteration in the order of the consonants must be ascribed to the attempt to make sense on the part of the person who first misread *mem* for *pe*. The line will now read as follows:

*They attacked with profane mockers,*
*To gnash upon me with their teeth.*

PSALM XXXVI. 2 (1).

[1] *The transgression of the wicked* [2] *saith within* [3] *my heart,*
*There is no fear of God before his eyes.*—R.V.

The marginal notes added by the revisers are an indication that they regarded this verse as very doubtful. The parallelism is in favour of the reading "his—his heart—his eyes." "The transgression of the wicked" is not obtainable from the Hebrew. Thus if the text be correct the translation must be:

*The saying of transgression to . . .*

or, *Transgression saith to the wicked in his heart.*

Can any one possibly believe that this verse is otherwise than corrupt? The personification of transgression is most unusual, and the revelation which Transgression is supposed to make does not in fact follow. Thus no explanation of the meaning being at all probable, the way is open for conjecture. The alteration of a single letter removes every difficulty, and gives an excellent sense. In place of נאם we have only to read נעים = נעם ("pleasant"), and all is plain:

*Transgression is sweet to the wicked in the deep of his heart,*
*There is no fear of God before his eyes.*

[1] Or, *Transgression saith to the wicked.*
[2] Or, *uttereth its oracle.*
[3] Or, according to many versions, *his*

PSALM XXXVI. 3 (2).

*That his iniquity shall* (not) *be found out* (and) *be hated.*—R.V.

There is no " and " and no " not." The expression is feeble, and the line is generally condemned. For שנא (" to be hated ") it seems easiest to read אנוש (" incurable "). This improves the sense :

*For he flattereth himself in his own eyes,*
*Till his iniquity be found to be incurable.*

PSALM XL. 7, 8 (6, 7).

*Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in ;*
*My ears hast thou opened ;*
*Burnt offerings and sin offerings hast thou not required.*
*Then said I, Lo, I am come,*
*In the roll of the book it is written of me,* etc.—R.V.

Familiarity with this passage has diverted the attention of countless generations of readers from the strange irregularity of its structure. The second line must necessarily be taken as parenthetical, but it obviously disturbs a very elaborate parallelism which exists between line 1 and line 3. The word " then " in line 4 has nothing to which it can possibly refer—it is an apodosis without a protasis. All this confusion can be remedied by a single expedient, viz. that the second and third lines should change places. The passage will then read thus :

*Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in,*
*Burnt offering and sin-offering thou hast not required.*
*Mine ears didst thou open,*
*Then said I, Lo, I am come,*
*In the roll of the book it is written of me,* etc.

This rearrangement has the obvious advantage that it puts " Mine ears didst thou open " in direct connection with the subsequent verbs, which, to the very end of

the psalm, are all of them in the first person. The sense is also greatly improved. From the confession that God does not require material sacrifice, the Psalmist suddenly rises to a new apprehension of the meaning of the law, and his ears are opened to discern the truth that sacrifice is a spiritual act, the consecration of self to the will of God—*i.e.* sacrifice is self-sacrifice.

The misplacing of a single line takes place elsewhere (*cf.* Psalm lxv. 10), and the cause is the same in both passages, the presence of an emphatic line which caught the coypist's attention and made him write it in advance of its proper place. Perhaps the identity of letters between the first syllable of the two short lines helped to cause confusion.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SECOND BOOK OF PSALMS

#### Psalms XLII.—LXXII.

Psalm XLII. 5 (4).

*These things I remember, and pour out my soul within me,*
*How I went with the throng, and led them to the house of God.*—R.V.

"These things" (אֵלֶּה) might refer to the reproaches mentioned in the previous verses, but if so, the construction of the second line is left, so to speak, in the air. On the other hand, it seems unlikely that "these things" can refer to something which has not yet been mentioned. Hence it seems not improbable that the true vocalisation might be אֱלֹהַי ("my God"), the words "and pour out my soul within me" being parenthetical, and practically meaning "with emotion":

*My God I remember, and I pour out my soul within me,*
*How I went with the throng*, etc.

The word occurs very frequently in this psalm, which makes this suggestion more probable; *cf.* verses 7, 12, and xliii. 5.

It should be noted that in verse 6 the stanza should end (by the transference of a *vav* to the succeeding word), "The help of my countenance and my God." Thus if the suggestion given above be accepted, the stanza begins and ends with the words "My God."

PSALM XLII. 7 (6).

*Therefore do I remember thee from the land of Jordan*
*And the Hermons, from the hill Mizar.*—R.V.

The revisers of the P.B. Version render " from the little hill." The feebleness of this translation points inevitably to the presence of corruption in the text. This suspicion is increased by the strange plural " the Hermons," the name being elsewhere found only in the singular. Something will, however, have to be done with the final *mem*, the mark of the plural; it should go with the word following.

Then with the slight change of a *resh* to a *daleth* in the last word, we may read ממהר מצעדי (" hastening my steps "); *cf.* Psalm xxxvii. 23, " the steps of a man."

The general sense of the stanza seems much improved by this reading. The Psalmist is encouraged by the thought of God to endure the perils of the journey to " the eternal city." That such an emendation is possible, with so slight an interference with the text, is a powerful argument in its favour :

*Therefore do I remember thee from the land of Jordan and Hermon,*
*And I hasten my steps.*

PSALM XLIV. 5.

*Thou art my King, O God ;*
*Command deliverance unto Jacob.*—A.V.

The division of the consonants as given in the LXX is certainly preferable, the final *mem* of the word Elohim going with the following word, and thus making it a participle :

*Thou art my King, O my God,*
*Which commandest deliverance unto Jacob.*

Or perhaps better, with the addition of a *vav*,

*Thou art my King and my God. . . .*

PSALM XLV. 5 (4).

*Because of truth and meekness* (and) *righteousness.*

The Revised Version translates "and meekness and righteousness," but there is no second "and." There is, in fact, no connexion between the two words either in the English or in the Hebrew, for "meekness" is not in the construct case as it ought to be in order to form the phrase "meekness of righteousness." There is, however, a less technical objection, viz. that this collocation of "meekness" with "righteousness" is so unusual that only our familiarity with it prevents our seeing its incongruity. A man may, of course, be both meek and righteous, but to predicate meekness of righteousness itself is extremely far-fetched. Many pious reflections have been lavished upon this phrase, but, as Deissmann rather unkindly remarks, "in matters linguistic piety is not enough!" The harm that is done by this far too frequent practice of spiritualising the impossible, is that it prevents a corrupt text being remedied by sane criticism. This has certainly happened here, for the remedy is not far to seek.

The consonants of the text are these: וענוה צדק, and if these letters be rightly divided, with the single change of the second *vav* into a *yod*, the true reading is at once obvious: ועני הצדק, *i.e.* "Do justice to the poor."

For this, *cf.* Psalm lxxxii. 3, "Do justice to the poor and needy." Surely this is more for edification than the common reading, and a truly noble passage has been sadly marred. It now reads:

*Ride on in the cause of truth,*
*And avenge the poor.*

PSALM XLV. 6–8 (5–7).

*Thine arrows are sharp;*
*The peoples fall under thee;*
(They are) *in the heart of the king's enemies.*
*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;*
*A sceptre of equity is the sceptre of Thy Kingdom.*

*Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness ;*
*Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee*
*With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*—R.V.

The insertion of "they are" in the third line is unwarranted. It is far better to suppose the misplacement of a line, such as is found in other passages, and to read :

*Thine arrows are sharp*
*In the hearts of the King's enemies ;*
*The peoples fall under thee.*

Similar misplacements occur in Psalms lxv. 10, lxxx. 16, cvii. 40, and cxvi. 14—which will all be considered later. Thus misplacement is not infrequent.

This emendation has a possible bearing upon the next line. No one can have failed to observe the strange inconsistency between lines 4 and 7. While it might perhaps be possible to speak of the Monarch as God, it is passing strange that after the interval of only two lines he should be spoken of as anointed by his God. This is indeed the view taken by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews in his reference of the psalm to Christ, but his faith did not rest upon his interpretation, rather his interpretation rested upon his faith. The passage must be dealt with upon the same principles as any other passage.

The transposition of line 2 to take the place hitherto occupied by line 3 suggests that the consonants אלהם, now pointed as אֱלֹהִים ("God"), should be otherwise pointed as אֲלֵהֶם ("upon them"). This would give an excellent parallelism :

*The peoples fall under thee,*
*Thy throne is over them for ever and ever.*

For the use of the preposition, *cf.* 1 Sam. xii. 13, "To establish his kingdom over (אל) Israel."

If this emendation be thought impossible, the only alternative appears to be that suggested in Dr. Peake's Commentary *in loc.*

PSALM XLVIII. 2.

*Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth,*
*Is Mount Zion,* (on) *the sides of the north,*
*The city of the great King.*—R.V.

It is increasingly felt that no explanation of "the sides of the north" is at all possible; *cf.* Peake' Commentary *in loc.* A reference to the topography of Jerusalem in such a connexion is quite unworthy, for the whole city, not a mere division of it, is the city of the great King, and the walls (*cf.* verse 13) are the walls that surround the entire city. Hence the phrase must be regarded as corrupt. The consonants of the word rendered "sides," and we are of course only concerned with the consonants, are ירכת.

In place of the כ (*caph*) may be read *beth* (ב), between which there is constant confusion—hence the word ירבת ("greatly" [1]). The word translated "north" means literally "the hidden part," but there is no need to translate it thus here, since it may be the ordinary participle and mean "hidden" in the sense of "treasured." Now this very participle is used in Ezek. vii. 22, "They shall pollute my treasure and robbers shall enter into her," the reference, of course, being to Jerusalem. This fact seems to settle the question.

The translation will therefore be:

*Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth,*
*Is Mount Zion, greatly treasured,*[2]
*The city of the great King.*

PSALM XLIX. 19, 20 (18, 19).

*Though while he lived he blessed his soul,*
*And men praise thee when thou doest well to thyself.*
*He* [3] *shall go to the generation of his fathers;*
*They* [4] *shall never see the light.*—R.V.

[1] Really a construct case, *cf.* Psalm lxv. 10, etc., but tending to become an adverb.
[2] Lit. "a chief treasure."
[3] Heb. *Thou shalt go,* or, *it shall go.*
[4] Or, *Which never more see.*

No serious problems of doctrine arise from this verse, but it presents a very troublesome puzzle, for the Hebrew literally translated is :

*Thou shalt come to the generation of his fathers.*

It is, of course, possible to emend by boldly reading יבוא (" he shall come "), but this does not explain the omission of the ת, the sign of the second person singular. It is also the sign of the third person singular feminine, and might conceivably refer back to " his soul," but this is most unlikely.

The suggestion now to be made is that this letter really belongs to the previous line, and that we should read תיטיב לכת. This phrase is highly idiomatic, and means " to make a fair show," lit. to make good one's going ; *cf.* Prov. xxx. 29, " Four things that are comely in going," and for a similar phrase, *cf.* Prov. xv. 21, " He maketh his going straight "—*i.e.* liveth a straight and honourable life.

Thus the present passage would read :

*And men praise thee when thou walkest proudly.*

This emendation explains the presence of the ת, which it is otherwise impossible to account for—and justifies the reading יבוא which is vouched for by the LXX, εἰσελεύσεται, and by all the older versions, and of which the reading " his fathers " is a sufficient proof.

PSALM L. 10.

*For every beast of the forest is mine,*
*And the cattle upon a thousand hills.*[1]—R.V.

The note appended by the revisers indicates the difficulty of the text, but does not remove it. The Hebrew translated literally, is " The cattle on the hills of a thousand," which makes very poor sense, if it may be said to make any sense at all.

Now the best emendation is always that which

[1] Or, *Upon the mountains where thousands are.*

makes the least possible change, and better than the best is an emendation which makes no change at all. It is possible to make such an emendation here! The word for "forest" is sometimes used as a proper name, much as in England the name Chase is frequently used for the district otherwise known as Cannock Chase. It is so used in Psalm cxxxii. 6, "The fields of the forest," *i.e.* probably Kirjath Jearim.

But if the word forest is really Forest, the same may be true of the word Eleph, which also happens to mean a thousand. In Joshua xviii. 28 we read as follows:

"Zelah, Eleph and Jebusi (this is Jerusalem), Gibeath *and* Kirjath" (? the hill of Kirjath).

The name of Eleph may very likely have been given to it because of its cattle, since it also means an ox; but this is not material to the argument. What is material is that in Joshua the very same verse which refers to Kirjath also mentions a place called Eleph. Both places were near one another, and also near Jerusalem, probably even visible from Jerusalem. They were places renowned for their herds of cattle; and it is not too much to infer that the cattle brought for sacrifice would commonly have come from thence. Hence a reference to them would be very apposite in the present verse. Thus we have been able to emend without an emendation!

The translation will, of course, be:

*For all the beasts of the Forest are mine,*
*And the cattle upon the hills of Eleph.*

It should be mentioned, in support of this rendering, that the LXX translates the word as "cattle," not as "a thousand."

PSALM LII. 6 (4).

*Thou lovest all devouring words,*
*O thou deceitful tongue.*—A.V.

There is no parallel to "words of devouring," דברי בלע, and it would be better to read דברי בליעל, and to

suppose that the *lamed* has been dropped before the *lamed* which is the first letter of the following word "tongue." It will be found, from many instances, that when two words, or two letters, are repeated the scribes have a tendency to omit one of them. A knowledge of this fact removes many difficulties from the text of the Book of Psalms and other books: it was first noted by Bishop Hare (1736). The translation is:

*Thou lovest all words of naughtiness,*
*O thou false tongue.*

PSALM LV. 7–9 (6–8).

*And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove!*
*Then would I fly away, and be at rest.*
*Lo, then would I wander far off,*
*I would lodge in the wilderness, Selah.*
*I would haste me to a shelter,*
*From the stormy wind and tempest.*—R.V.

It has been necessary to transcribe these verses at length, but in fact there is only a single word which needs consideration, and that the least important of any, the word "Selah." As a general rule this word is placed so as to mark the conclusion of a stanza, and its natural place would have been after the last line, since verse 10 begins a new subject, the description of the wickedness of the city, from which the Psalmist desires to make his escape. The word "Selah," which appears to be a musical direction, occurs seventy-one times in the Psalms. Prior to the consideration of any particular passages, it occurred to me that should there be any word similar in form to "Selah," it was just the kind of mistake that would be made by a copyist to confound it with a word which occurs so frequently. This anticipation has been fully realised.

One remarkable fact must now be noticed, viz. that "Selah" seems to have an affinity with the word "wilderness." It is so here, also in Psalm lxviii. 8, "O God, when thou wentest through the wilderness

—Selah" ; where it stands in the middle of a sentence ; also in Psalm cxliii. 6, "My soul thirsteth for thee as a weary land. Selah."

Both these passages will be discussed later, but even at this stage it may be remarked that the connexion between Selah, and a reference to the desert, is in itself enough to suggest the question whether there is any word properly applicable to a desert which might have been confused with "Selah." Such a word is מלח ("saltness" or "barrenness"), *cf.* Jer. xvii. 6 ; Psalm cvii. 34 ; and Psalm lx. (in title of the psalm). This emendation adds much force to the present passage, though the evidence in its favour will be more clearly seen when the other passages have been dealt with.

The translation will be :

*I will lodge in the barren wilderness.*

PSALM LV. 20 (19).

*God shall hear, and answer* [1] *them,*
*Even he that abideth of old, Selah.*
(The men) *who have no changes,*
*And who fear not God.*—R.V.

This verse is undeniably obscure, though made somewhat clearer by adopting the reading of the LXX, "shall afflict them." The main difficulty is, however, the division of the verse by the Selah, and the absence of any verb governing the clause which follows. The difficulty is increased by dropping the words inserted by the revisers ("the *men*"), which have no authority. The verse literally translated is as follows :

*God shall hear, and afflict them,*
*Even he that sitteth* (as judge) *of old, Selah.*
*Who have no changes,*
*And fear not God.*

This makes it appear as if there is no connexion whatever between the first two and the last two lines. Furthermore, Selah is not wanted where it stands in

[1] Or, *afflict* (LXX ταπεινώσει).

the middle of the verse. The passage is thus evidently corrupt.

The remedy can only be found by facing the facts: it can never be found by making illegitimate attempts to translate the untranslatable. What is wanted is (1) to get rid of Selah, (2) to find a suitable verb.

These two essentials can be achieved by one and the same operation. The only change needed is one of vocalisation, סלה being read as יסלה ("he shall rebuke"). Thus a verb is found, and the inconvenient Selah vanishes:

*God shall hear, and humble them,*
*And he that sitteth as judge of old shall rebuke them;*
*Because they have no changes,*
*And fear not God.*

PSALM LVI. 5 (4).

*In God will I praise his word;*
*In God I have put my trust, I will not be afraid;*
*What can flesh do unto me?*—R.V.

Quite apart from their unusualness, the words "In God will I praise his word" do not suit their context, and some commentators (*cf.* Peake's Commentary *in loc.*) forcibly remove them, though allowing them to stand in verse 11. This is a pity, for it deprives the psalm of a beautiful refrain. Still the objection holds that not praise but prayer is needed, certainly here, and probably also in verse 11. A simple emendation removes the difficulty. In place of אהלל דברו, read איחל לדברו ("I will wait for his word"). For this, *cf.* Psalm cxix. 114, 147.

The same correction should be made twice in verse 11.

PSALM LVI. 7 (6).

*They gather themselves together, they hide themselves,*
*They mark my steps,*
*Even as they have waited for my soul.*—R.V.

A very slight emendation greatly improves this verse, and strengthens the parallelism. In the first

place בַּאֲשֶׁר (" Even as ") is weak, and must mean " as they have laid wait for my soul in times past." This should be emended to read בְּאֹרְחִי, " in my paths," when it becomes parallel to " my steps."

PSALM LVII. 5 (4).

*My soul is among lions ;*
*I lie among them that are set on fire,*
*Even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows,*
*And their tongue a sharp sword.*—R.V.

" The men that are set on fire " are quite impossible persons. The word is evacuated of meaning if rendered " greedily devour." By far the better plan is to suppose that this adjective stood originally at the end of the third line, and that, this line being a long one, its last word was written above it, and was afterwards incorporated in the line previous. The copyist who made the mistake then altered " lieth " into " I lie," by the addition of an *aleph*, which copyists always considered legitimate.

The translation will now be as follows :

*My soul lieth among lions,*
*Even among the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and burning arrows,*
*And their tongue a sharp sword.*

PSALM LVIII. 8 (7).

*Let them melt away as water that runneth apace :*
*When he aimeth his arrows, let them be as though they were cut off.*—R.V.

There is much that is wrong here. " Apace " might perhaps be emended to " to the sea." The next line is undoubtedly corrupt. The meaning of the R.V. appears to be that the arrows shot by the wicked against the righteous are *pointless* arrows, which can do no harm.

This seems very far-fetched. The particle כמו (" like ") is elsewhere only used with nouns. I would suggest that בם should be emended into בם (" at them ") and that the ו should go with the next verb. The subject throughout will then be God.

*He shall shoot his arrows at them, and they shall be cut off.*

PSALM LIX. 13 (12).

(For) *the sin of their mouth,* (and) *the words of their lips,*
*Let them even be taken in their pride.*—R.V.

If the words inserted by the revisers can stand, which is extremely doubtful, there would be no need of emendation. The emendation of the passage is simple, not involving any consonantal change whatever. For דִּבַּר (" word of "), read דֶּבֶר = " a pestilence "; *cf.* Psalm xci. 3, 6. If lips can be poisonous (Psalm cxl. 4), there is no reason why they should not be termed pestilential. The image is unusual, which is the reason for its having been pointed wrongly; and the phrase by which the true reading has been replaced is so common that it has, apparently, never occurred to any one that it was even doubtful. The comparison between the line as it stands and the line as emended is between obscurity and simplicity, between weakness and strength.

*Their mouth is sin, their lips are a pestilence,*
*But they shall be taken in their pride.*

PSALM LIX. 16.

*They shall wander up and down for meat,*
*And tarry all night if they be not satisfied.*—R.V.

This is all very well if we are at liberty to invert the order of the second line, which, taken literally, should be translated:

*If they be not satisfied and pass the night.*

It is a great mistake to gloss over difficulties, because

by so doing one loses invaluable clues. My suggestion is that the first *aleph* in לא אם has been added by some ancient scribe, and added quite wrongly; the true reading being:

*They shall be satisfied with plenty, and lie all night.*

This contemptuously refers to the sleep of the dogs gorged with food. This might seem a hazardous emendation but it has in its favour that it gives significance to the "and." The night of repletion is in the next verse contrasted with the "morning" spent by the Psalmist in prayer.

PSALM LXIV. 9 (8).

*So they shall be made to stumble, their own tongue being against them;* or,
*So shall they against whom their tongue was make them to stumble.*—R.V.

Evidently corrupt. The Prayer Book Version with its usual good sense arrives at the true meaning, viz. "their own tongue shall make them fall," and this meaning will have, in some way or another, to be got out of the text. The consonants of the Hebrew text are wrongly pointed, and should be read as ויכשיל העולים, i.e. *Their own tongue shall cause the wicked to fall.*

A similar emendation is made in Psalm xxxvii. 28, where it is confirmed by its restoration of the alphabetical order in an acrostic psalm.

PSALM LXV. 10, 11 (9, 10).

*Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it,*
*Thou greatly enrichest it;*
*The river of God is full of water;*
*Thou providest them corn, when thou hast so prepared the earth.*
*Thou waterest her furrows abundantly,*
*Thou settlest the ridges thereof.*—R.V.

It should be noted that the verbs translated as "waterest" and "settlest" are really in the third

person singular, though it has been suggested by the commentators that they are in the infinitive used as a kind of gerund, which is highly improbable. A more serious objection is that "the river of God is full of water" has no connexion with either what precedes or what follows it. A single supposition removes both difficulties—viz. that this third line is out of place, and should be put after line 4. The passage will then run as follows:

*Thou visitest the earth and waterest it,*
*Thou greatly enrichest it;*
*Thou providest them corn,*
*When thou hast thus prepared it* (the earth).
*The river of God that is full of water*
*Watereth her furrows, settleth her ridges,* etc.

The passage is now restored to its natural sequence, and gains greatly by the change. Misplaced lines are not easily detected, but when the correction is made it is easily seen to be inevitable. Here both the grammar and meaning are improved.

PSALM LXVII. 5 (4).

*For thou shalt judge the peoples with equity,*
*And govern* [1] *the nations upon earth. Selah.*—R.V.

It seems very doubtful whether the word properly translated "lead" can bear the more general sense of "govern"; and yet the idea of leading, though applicable to the Chosen People, and to God's faithful servants (*cf.* Psalms xxiii. 3; xxxi. 4), does not seem fitted to express God's uncovenanted mercies to the heathen. There is another and perhaps more serious objection to the word, viz. that the concluding letter *mem* is the personal pronoun *them*, which is not needed, there being already an object to the verb; and it seems strange to say:

*The nations upon earth thou wilt lead them.*

[1] Heb. *lead.*

These two objections taken together make the reading appear to be doubtful. No alteration of the consonants is necessary, for, with other pointing, the consonants may be read as "thou wilt comfort." The concluding *mem* is here not the personal pronoun, but the third root letter of the verb נחם ("comfort").

The word "comfort" is very frequent in Isaiah, though ordinarily used of Israel. But the missionary fervour of the present psalm would explain the extension of "comfort," Israel's peculiar blessing, to the Gentile world. Indeed this extension was probably first made by Isaiah himself (*cf.* lxvi. 13). The Selah, with its suggestion of strong emotion, points to some more extensive promise than would be indicated by the mere statement that God would lead the Gentiles. Both sense and parallelism are improved by this emendation, which, strictly speaking, is not an emendation at all, being merely concerned with a change in vocalisation. For these various reasons it seems that this suggestion is an improvement upon the text. The translation will run as follows:

> *For thou shalt judge the peoples with equity,*
> *And shalt comfort the nations upon earth.*

PSALM LXVIII. 8, 9 (7, 8).

> *O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people,*
> *When thou didst march through the wilderness;*
> *Selah.*
> *The earth trembled,*
> *The heavens also dropped at the presence of God.*—R.V.

The Selah occupies a very unusual position, being in the middle of an uncompleted sentence. In the M.T. the Selah is followed by a full stop, simply because it is ordinarily followed by this stop, as being the last word of a sentence; but this is impossible as it now stands. The suggestion already made in the note on Psalm lv. 8, must be repeated here, viz. that סלה stands

for מלח. This would at once remove the difficulty, and would materially add to the beauty:

*When thou didst march through the barren wilderness;*
*The earth trembled,*
*The heavens dropped . . . plentiful rain.*

*i.e.* the barren wilderness was turned into fruitfulness. This suggestion is strongly supported by the various passages in which a supposed Selah goes with the word meaning wilderness.

PSALM LXVIII. 15 (14).

*When the Almighty scattered kings therein,*
(It was as when) *it snoweth in Zalmon.*—R.V.

Those who are so minded may consult the commentaries in order to discover the various opinions held with regard to the meaning of this cryptic verse, and they will find *quot homines tot sententiæ*. Under these circumstances, it seems best to treat it as having no meaning at all. The one guiding principle to be relied upon at the outset is that the whole psalm, and this stanza in particular, shows many traces of Deborah's Song. "The women that publish good tidings" evidently refers primarily to Deborah and to her fellow-singers. The taunts launched against those who "abode among the sheepfolds" are echoed and elaborated in the words:

*Will ye lie among the sheepfolds.*
*As the wings of a dove covered with silver,*
*And her pinions with yellow gold.*

There is much in both passages about the division of the spoil. One thing only is needed to complete the allusions, and that is a reference to the mother of Sisera, looking out of the window and expecting the return of her son. Some reference to this, the culmination of Deborah's Song, might have been expected to occur in a psalm which makes such evident use of this

ancient ballad. This expectation may direct our investigation, and may suggest a possible restoration of this line; though here, as in all critical researches, the starting point must be made from the actual consonants of the Hebrew text.

The word שלג ("snow") gives the first intimation that we are upon the right track, for, if two of its consonants exchange places, we have שגל ("the queen mother"), which is the very word needed to give her proper title to the mother of Sisera.[1] The mere fact that this discovery is possible may be said to make it probable.

The next word to be considered is the word בה ("in it"), which is usually rendered "therein," and is supposed to refer to the land of Canaan, but, as Dr. Perowne says, "it must be confessed that there is something singular in this vague reference to an idea scarcely implied even in the context."

Now in the well-known sentence of Deborah's Song which tells of the mother of Sisera looking through the window, it is said that "she *cried* through the lattice." The Hebrew verb used is יבב, and the third person sing. fem. of this word (minus the *yod*, which would not, of course, appear in the ancient MSS.) would be בה ("she cried").

This is a remarkable coincidence, and when these two coincidences are taken together, they constitute a very high degree of probability.

What is now left to be dealt with is the one phrase בצלמון ("in Zalmon"). This must be regarded as a corruption introduced by the supposed reference to "snow." But if snow be a mistake, Zalmon also must be a mistake. It was never a very probable suggestion, for being a low hill it was not very likely to have been often capped with snow. What was the word in the original text which gave occasion to the emendation Zalmon? That it must have had some resemblance to Zalmon is obvious, for the scribes, for all their imperfections, were sufficiently good critics not to emend at

[1] Some scholars actually emend "spoil" to "queen" in Judges v. 30.

haphazard. The consonants of Zalmon are צלמון, the last three of which may stand. With regard to the two consonants which remain, צ has a great similarity to א, and ל to ר. Thus it is suggested that the original word misread as צלמון was ארמון (" palace ").

The text as amended will therefore be :

*When the Almighty scattered kings,*
*The queen mother cried out in the palace.*

PSALM LXXI. 3.

*Be thou to me a rock of habitation, whereunto I may continually resort ;*
*Thou hast given commandment to save me.*—R.V.

The interest of this passage lies in the fact that it is a quotation from Psalm xxxi. 1–3, but with some very strange variations, and it is the business of criticism to discover the reason for these variations The words that differ are " I may . . . commandment," the words which are found occupying their place in the earlier psalm being these :

*For an house of defence.*

At first sight it would seem that these two lines are so different that it must be granted that the variation was intentional, but a closer scrutiny will lead to an opposite conclusion. It will be noticed that the most important difference is the position of the ד, which, in the earlier psalm, stands after the two letters צו, but in the later psalm stands before them. This was no doubt due to the carelessness of a copyist. A later scribe would thus have been set to find the best sense of which the following letters were capable : לבתמד צוות. Quite naturally he would regard the last four letters as yielding צויתי (" thou hast commanded "), and the three letters which precede them as giving the word תמיד (" always "). His difficulty would be with the first two letters—לב. They could not stand for לב (" heart "), since this word would give no sense whatever,

so he would be driven to suppose that some letters had been omitted.

He would now argue that it would not do to add any letters promiscuously, but that he must only add such letters as are occasionally omitted. One of such letters might obviously be *vav*, since this letter is often written defectively by means of a dot placed over the letter following it. Sometimes also the silent consonant *aleph* is omitted, and he would suppose that it might have been omitted here. Thus he would turn the consonants לב into the full word לבוא ("to go"), and would do this with a good conscience, having, as he imagined, a sound reason to believe the added consonants to have been omitted. The result gave indeed a poor sense, but better a poor sense than none at all.

His mistake lay in not seeing that a previous copyist had blundered. Quite probably he had no MS. at hand with which to compare the one from which he was copying. We are in a happier position, since we have in the M.T. of Psalm xxxi. what was, beyond a doubt, the original reading.

Since writing the above my conclusions have been confirmed by a study of the evidence of the LXX. The earlier psalm has "for a house of defence to save me" (*οἶκον καταφυγῆς*), and the later "for a strong place to save me." These renderings no doubt represent the same Hebrew text, for "a house" (*οἶκος*) and "a place" (*τόπος*), are both used in the LXX as equivalents for בית ("house"); *cf.* 1 Sam. xxiv. 23, and Psalm cxviii. 54 (Heb. cxix. 54).

In Symmachus we have the first occurrence of the error; since he renders: "unto a strong citadel, that I may flee always; thou hast commanded to save me."

Thus it is possible not merely to trace the error, but to date it as having been made between the date of the LXX and of Symmachus, *i.e.* between, say, 200 B.C. and A.D. 200. The M.T. evidently followed the MSS. upon which this version was based, and not those of the LXX.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE THIRD BOOK OF PSALMS

PSALMS LXXIII.—LXXXIX.

### PSALM LXXIII. 10–13.

*Therefore his people return hither;*
*And waters of a full cup are wrung out by them.*
*And they say, How doth God know?*
*And is there knowledge in the Most High?*
*Behold these are the wicked;*
*And, being always at ease, they increase in riches,*
*Surely in vain have I cleansed my heart,*
*And washed my hands in innocency.*—R.V.

The first line is meaningless, but has been excellently emended:

*Therefore are they satisfied with bread.*

It should be observed that לחם ("bread") seems peculiarly open to mistake; *cf.* note on Hos. ix. 4, in *The Message of Hosea*, p. 137.

But even when this emendation is accepted, the sequence is far from clear, for the questions asked in the next verse are hardly likely to be asked by the ungodly. My suggestion, a very simple one, is that we ought to read "And I said" in place of "And they said," the omission of the single letter *vav* making this difference. This change renders the whole passage consecutive and tremendously powerful.

The Psalmist has been speaking of the prosperity of the wicked, ending with the verse:

*Therefore are they satisfied with bread,*
*And waters of a full cup are drained out by them.*

Then at once he tells of the supreme temptation which came to him to doubt the omniscience of God :

*And I said, how doth God know ?*
*And is there knowledge in the Most High ?* etc.

In favour of this emendation it may be mentioned :

1. The change from *I* to *they* would obviously be the work of some scrupulous scribe, who was shocked at such words being attributed to a pious Israelite. A similar scruple has thrown Hos. xii. into almost hopeless confusion (*cf. The Message of Hosea, in loc.*).

2. The divine name " the Most High " could hardly have been used by the ungodly, but it is natural upon the lips of a pious Israelite, even when assailed by doubts of the divine omniscience.

3. But there is a stronger argument, the significance of which has been overlooked. The LXX actually reads the words " And I said," though it places them before " surely " in line 7. The explanation of this phenomenon is very simple, viz. that there were two sets of MSS., the one set reading the original words " And I said," and the other set giving the later reading " And they said." Thus the LXX inserted both readings.

PSALM LXXIV. 3.

*Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual ruins,*
*All the evil that the enemy hath done in the sanctuary.*
—R.V.

" Lift up thy feet " has been explained as " Come speedily to visit." This is doubtful, and the parallelism of the couplet is deplorable. All will be remedied by a re-division of the consonants yielding פעם כל (" now at length all "). The mistake has arisen from confounding the two very different meanings of פעם, which as a noun means " footstep," and as an adverb " at length." This change connects the two lines, and the double " all " gives a better parallelism :

*Now at length restore all the ancient desolations,*
*All the evil that the enemy hath wrought in the sanctuary.*

It should be mentioned that several probable emendations have been made by editors in this and the previous psalms; *cf.* the Commentaries *in loc.*

PSALM LXXIV. 5.

*They seemed as men that lifted up*
*Axes upon a thicket of trees.*—R.V.

Literally "it seemed as though." This phrase is unusual. The verb ידע ("know") is so frequently confused with other verbs of which the central letter is a *resh*, that it is quite probable that this has happened here. We may read יְרֵעוּ, "they break" or "destroy," a word used in Jer. xi. 16 of branches.

*They smote as one that lifteth up*
*Axes against a thicket of trees.*

PSALM LXXIV. 9.

*There is no more any prophet,*
*Neither is there among us any that knoweth how long,*
*How long, O God, shall the enemy reproach?* etc.—R.V.

The phrase "knoweth how long" seems to have escaped suspicion, though there is no other instance of it. The "how long" of the third line is used in the ordinary way as a question. It may be suggested that a word closely resembling "how long" has been attracted, as often happens, by reason of its propinquity to a similar word, and that the original word was ערמה ("wisdom"); *cf.* Prov. i. 4; viii. 5, where it is used in a good sense. Our Lord speaks of prophets and wise men, thus summing up the teachers of old into those who received a divine message directly, and those whose ordinary faculties were quickened. The Psalmist does the same:

*There is no more any prophet,*
*Neither is there among us one that knoweth wisdom.*

The alteration is merely a *resh* in place of a *daleth*. For the sense, *cf.* Ezek. vii. 26.

PSALM LXXIV. 14.

*Thou breakest the heads of leviathan in pieces,*
*Thou gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.*—R.V.

"The people inhabiting the wilderness" cannot stand; both the grammar and sense are at fault. The literal meaning is "to the people, to the wild beasts." Something is evidently wrong with the word "people," Heb. עם. For this read עף (the common mistake of *mem* for *pe*). This word (it is written defectively) means *birds*. Possibly also the "and" (ו) has been dropped by the scribe, a secondary mistake made necessary by the first. The line will then run:

*Thou gavest him to be meat to the birds and to the beasts.*

PSALM LXXIV. 19.

*O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove unto the wild beast;*
*Forget not the life of thy poor for ever.*—R.V.

None of the ancient versions contains the word "turtle-dove," but most of them support the reading of the LXX, "the soul that giveth thee praise"; *cf.* Psalm lxxvi. 11, "The wrath of man shall give thee praise." The difference is due to the common confusion between *resh* (text) and *daleth* (LXX). The word translated "wild beast" is also exactly the same in form with the word in the second line which is translated "life." Evidently this will not hold. Probably neither is right, but הוות ("destruction") should be read in both sentences.

It is doubtful whether the reading of the LXX, "the soul that giveth thee praise," is really correct. Evidently they read the last two letters of the line as דכ, not as רכ. But this word can mean "oppressed," and occurs in connexion with the word "poor" in verse 21. I suggest, therefore, that the true reading is נפשות דך

(" the souls of the oppressed "), the latter word being used collectively.

The passage would read thus :

*O deliver not the souls of the oppressed to destruction ;*
*Forget not the destruction of thy poor for ever.*

It is remarkable how often the word דך has given rise to errors in the text; *cf.* especially the notes on Psalm x. 8, 10, and 12.

PSALM LXXVI. 11 (10).

*Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee :*
*The residue of wrath shalt thou gird* [1] *upon thee.*—R.V.

The LXX reads " shall hold festival to thee." This is possible, though not very probable. The word that seems most to need emendation is שארית (" remnant "), which does not seem to give any sense at all In place of this, read שאות ; *cf.* Prov. i. 27, " A devastating storm."

" The tempest of wrath shalt thou restrain." The confusion between *resh* and *vav* is very probable, the difference between the two letters being confined to the length of the top stroke.

PSALM LXXVII. 6, 7 (5, 6).

*I have considered the days of old,*
*The years of ancient times.*
*I call to remembrance my song in the night :*
*In my heart will I muse.*

The phrase " my song in the night " is difficult, and I think meaningless. The LXX reads καὶ ἐμελέτησα (" and I meditated ") and the Vulgate " et meditatus sum." This evidently implies that the line as then read was : והגיתי בלילה, " And I meditate in the night."

The change merely involves the dropping of an ג before ג.

[1] Or, *restrain.*

PSALM LXXVII. 11, 12 (10, 11).

*And I said, This is my infirmity ;*
(But I will remember) *the years of the right hand of the Most High.*
*I will make mention of the deeds of the Lord ;*
*For I will remember the wonders of old.*—R.V.

The addition "But I will remember" is obviously indefensible. At any cost the noble phrase, "The years of the right hand of the Most High," must be retained; and the alteration of "years" into "is changed," following the LXX, must be condemned, if only by the occurrence of "years" in verse 6. Evidently, therefore, what is wrong must be sought in the line "I will remember the deeds of the Lord."

N.B.—The R.V. needlessly alters to "I will make mention of."

The Hebrew words are as follows: מעללי יה. All that is needed is to invert the two consonants *mem* and *ayin*, and to re-point. This will give: עמי לילה ("with me by night"). For this phrase, *cf.* Psalm xlii. 9, "And by night a song is with me."

The translation will now be as follows:

*And I said, This is my infirmity ;*
*The years of the right hand of the Most High*
*Do I remember within me by night.*
*Yea, I remember thy wonders of old,* etc.

The psalm is an evening psalm; *cf.* verses 6, 7, which so closely resemble the present verses as restored that it will be well to give both passages.

*I have considered the days of old,*
*The years of ancient times do I remember.*
*And I meditate in the night,*
*In my heart do I muse.*

Compared with :

*The years of the right hand of the Most High*
*Do I remember within me by night ;*
*Yea, I remember thy wonders of old ;*
*And meditate upon all thy work,*
*And upon thy doings do I muse.*

It will be noticed that the same three verbs, " remember," " meditate," " muse," occur in both passages, and in the same order, thus making a free refrain.

PSALM LXXVIII. 9.

*Being armed and carrying bows.*—R.V.

There is evidently some mistake here, since there are two construct cases attached to a single noun. It is clear that one at any rate of these is not wanted, and yet it cannot be arbitrarily cut out. Hence it would seem that the second must be joined to the first. With small changes in vocalisation this can readily be done, and this gives the word נקשרים (" bound ").

This would take the word " bows " as a cognate accusative ; *cf.* Neh. iv. 18, " Girded *with* sword."

Thus the second verb disappears, and the translation is :

*Girded with bows.*

PSALM LXXVIII. 48, 49.

*He gave over their cattle to the hail,*
*And their flocks to lightnings ;*
*He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger,*
*Wrath, indignation and trouble,*
*Sending evil angels among them.*—Lit. trans.

No mention of the sending of evil angels occurs elsewhere. The form of the phrase is unusual, for the word " angels " or " messengers " is in the construct case, and רעים cannot be the noun " evils," which should

be רעות. With hesitation I suggest that what is intended may be רעם ("thunder"):

*He sent messengers of thunder.*

The previous verse has made mention of lightnings, and the present verse seems to refer to the devastation caused by the storm. What more probable than that the subject should be concluded by the observation that the storm was sent as a message to the Egyptians? The only objection to this emendation is that it has not been before suggested. For a striking parallel, *cf.* Psalm civ. 4:

*Who maketh winds his messengers,*
*His ministers a flaming fire.*

*Cf.* also Psalm lxxxi. 8, "The secret place of thunder."

PSALM LXXIX. 10.

*Let the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed*
*Be known among the heathen in our sight.*—R.V.

This translation is only made possible by the inversion of the order of the lines in the Hebrew. It is probable that the troublesome word ידע ("know") is again at fault, and that in its place should be read וירע ("let it be ill with"); *cf.* Psalm cvi. 32, "It was ill with Moses for their sake."

*Let it be ill with the heathen in our sight,*
*In vengeance for the blood of thy saints which is shed.*

PSALM LXXX. 7 (6).

*Thou makest us a strife to our neighbours:*
*And our enemies laugh us to scorn.*—R.V.

The word "strife" would naturally mean an object of contention among themselves, which cannot be the meaning here. Thus in place of מדון ("strife") read מנוד ("an object of derision"). This emendation

improves the parallelism. As so often, the scribes have substituted a more familiar, though less appropriate word, for the true reading. The error is reproduced in the LXX, which is a proof that it is of early date.

PSALM LXXX. 15–18 (14–17).

*Turn again, we beseech thee, O God of hosts :*
*Look down from heaven and behold, and visit this vine,*
*And the stock which thy right hand hath planted,*
*And the branch* [1] *that thou madest strong for thyself.*
*It is burnt with fire, it is cut down :*
*They perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.*
*Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand,*
*And upon the son of man, whom thou madest strong for thyself.*—R.V.

There is certainly something wrong here. Lines 4 and 8 might seem to be a refrain, but if so, the translation "branch" given above must of necessity be wrong, since the word "son" in line 8, which is the same Hebrew word בן, cannot possibly be translated anything but "son." But if translated "son" in line 4 it does not make sense, nor does it agree with the two feminine participles "burnt" and "cut down" in the line that follows.

What has happened is quite clear. Lines 3 and 7 both end with the same Hebrew word—"thy right hand," and the eye of the copyist has evidently wandered, so that he has inserted after line 3 words which do not really occur till after line 7. Thus it is evident that line 4 should be struck out. So soon as this excision has been made, all difficulty vanishes and the whole passage runs smoothly. By the excision of line 4, the feminine participles in the fifth line are put in close connexion with the noun to which they refer. There is no reason to rewrite this passage, since all that is needed is to cut out line 4.

[1] Heb. *son.*

PSALM LXXXI. 6, 7 (5, 6).

*He appointed it in Joseph for a testimony,*
*When he went out over the land of Egypt:*
(Where) *I heard a language that I knew not,*
*I removed his shoulder from the burden,* etc.—R.V.

The third line is incredibly weak. This is still more apparent if the "where" be omitted, it having been inserted by the revisers as a palliative. The attempts made by various editors to make some sense out of the line are vitiated by their suggestion that the "I" refers to Israel, whereas all the "I's" which follow—"I removed," "I answered," "I proved"—obviously refer, as this also must refer, to God. The LXX calmly drops the first person altogether, and renders "He heard a language that he knew not." Some editors have accepted this reading, but it is unutterably feeble.

This emendation has diverted attention from the one remaining clue, which is to be found in the word שְׂפַת, which is translated "language," but is, in fact, on the construct case, and should mean "language of," though there is no noun following it. Thus the word is evidently a mis-reading, and its correction solves the hitherto insuperable problem.

The last two words are correct—"I know," "I heard." They occur together in Exod. iii. 7, "I have *heard* their cry, for I *know* their sorrows." This passage was evidently in the mind of the Psalmist, and he quotes its two chief words. It follows as a natural inference that the first two words of the present line originally referred to what was heard and known, namely, the affliction of Israel in Egypt, when "God went over Egypt" to deliver them.

The consonants which must give this meaning are שפתלא. The last letter *aleph* is one constantly introduced by the scribes, and may be changed to a *vav*; *cf.* note on Psalm lxxi. 3. All that is then needed is to alter the order of two adjacent letters, and read: שפלתו ("his low estate"); *cf.* Isaiah xxxii. 19.

The line will then be :

*I knew and heard of his low estate.*

There is now a sequence of no less than six verbs in the first person, and all of them refer to God as the deliverer of His people. Apart from this emendation the subsequent first persons have no point of departure, and hang, so to speak, in the air.

PSALM LXXXV. 9 (8).

*I will hear what God the Lord will speak :*
*For He will speak peace to His people and to His saints :*
*But let them not turn again to folly.*—R.V.

The final word כִּסְלָה is only used in Job iv. 6, where it is translated " confidence." A further objection to the verse as it stands is that this warning, though perhaps salutary, seems a little out of place in addressing the " saints," since it implies previous unfaithfulness.

The LXX reading is valuable. (1) It takes אַל " not ") as אֶל (" to "), and probably rightly, as it occurs twice in the previous line. (2) It discards the doubtful word " folly," and reads the לֵב as לֵב (" heart ").

It makes no mention of the last three letters, but these beyond a doubt should be vocalised as " Selah."

Though the LXX is probably right in the main, there is a certain poverty of expression in its rendering :

*And to those who turn their heart unto Him ;*

especially since " unto Him " is an addition of their own.

I am inclined, however, to suggest that the original reading was שִׁבְרֵי לֵב (" broken in heart "), and that the sentence should be rendered :

*And to the broken in heart. Selah.*

This reference to the fullness of the Divine mercy explains and justifies the Selah, as the expression of thankful emotion.

PSALM LXXXVII. 5.

*Yea, of Zion it shall be said, this one and that one was born in her.*—R.V.

The Revised Version fails to mention the remarkable reading of the LXX, *μήτηρ Σίων ἐρεῖ*. This reading implies that the original text was אם יאמר, and that the first of these two identical syllables was afterwards dropped, a dittograph having evidently been supposed by a subsequent coypist. The only question that remains to be asked is how this reading is to be translated. Dr. Perowne translates "Mother Zion shall say." This is very unlikely. Peake's Commentary suggests, on the authority of the LXX, "I call Zion mother." But the LXX does not render the words in the first person, but in the third person. I prefer to follow the LXX exactly, and to translate as follows:

*And shall call Zion mother,*
*Even every man that was born in her.*

PSALM LXXXVII. 7.

*They that sing as well as they that dance* (shall say),
*All my fountains are in thee.*—R.V.

The insertion of "shall say" is inadmissible, though some verb is undoubtedly needed. This can be supplied by the simple redivision of the words now rendered "all my fountains" which turns them into "All of them sing" (כלם ענו). The only change is a *yod* into a *vav*, and such confusion is of constant occurrence.

The couplet will now run:

*The singers together with the dancers*
*All of them sing of thee* (*i.e. Jerusalem*).

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# CHAPTER IX

## THE FOURTH AND FIFTH BOOKS OF PSALMS

### Psalms XC.—CL.

### Psalm XC. 5, 6.

*Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep:*
*In the morning they are like grass which groweth up.*
*In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up;*
*In the evening it is cut down, and withereth.*—R.V.

There is considerable difficulty connected with the verb translated "groweth up." Its meaning is to "change," and this change may imply either freshness or decay. Some commentators give the first meaning in line 2, and the second meaning in line 3, but this seems inadmissible. Since, therefore, a choice must be made between the two meanings, and since the first meaning is evidently demanded in line 1, the same meaning must be continued in line 3. This involves a somewhat weak repetition, and it seems probable that there is a mistaken reading in the second clause. What is needed is a slightly stronger word than "flourisheth," in the same way that "withereth" in the last line is stronger than "cut down." What is evidently needed is that the word, whatever it was, that was mistaken for "groweth up" (חלף), should be one sufficiently like it in form to be mistaken for it. There is such a word חלם, "be healthy or vigorous." This would of course be an instance of the common confusion between *pe* and *mem*, and quite naturally the near presence of חלף would incline the copyist into

making this very natural mistake. Certainly the improvement in the sense is considerable :

*In the morning it flourisheth and is strong.*

PSALM XCIII. 1.

*The Lord reigneth ; he is apparelled with majesty ;*
*The Lord is apparelled, he hath girded himself with strength :*
*The world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.*—R.V.

This is an example, only too frequent, of the way in which commentators have endeavoured to evade a difficulty, and by so doing have missed a clue. The second " apparelled " needs an accusative as much as the first. Prof. Addis says that a noun has been dropped after " he hath girded himself." Why should it have been dropped ? It does not seem to have been noticed that the first word of the next line אף (" also ") has very little meaning as it stands, but this very word, if regarded as a noun, means " wrath." Thus all that is necessary is to suppose that the lines have been wrongly divided.

*The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty ;*
*The Lord is clothed with strength, he girdeth himself with wrath :*
*He hath established the world, that it cannot be moved.*

For the word rendered " established," *cf.* Psalm lxxv. 4.

PSALM XCIV. 10, 11.

*He that chastiseth the nations, shall not he correct ?*
*He that teacheth man knowledge . . .*
*The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men*
*That they are a breath.* (Lit. trans.)

The A.V. boldly inserts " shall not he know ? " and these words are obviously needed, and are indeed essential to the meaning. Why, then, were they dropped ? A knowledge of scribal idiosyncrasies

supplies the answer. Originally there were three words all from the same root ידע ("know"), and the middle one was dropped by a copyist. There are so many instances of dropped words and letters, that this inference is warranted even without special evidence, and was in fact first made by Bishop Hare, though his valuable work on the Psalms has been long forgotten.

PSALM XCV. 9.

*When your fathers tempted me,*
*Proved me, and saw my work.*—R.V.

The concluding line has been taken in two ways: (1) "Although they had seen my work," *i.e.* My wonders wrought in their behalf. This gives a good sense, but it gives an inaccurate meaning to the particle "also," which the revisers wrongly rendered as "and." (2) "Yea, they saw my work," *i.e.* my chastisement. But what is needed is certainly something which aggravated the sinfulness of the Israelites. Hence the text seems to be corrupt.

The Heb. text is גם ראו פעלו. This might be altered to גם סרו מעלי ("Yea, they departed from me"). This would involve the common confusion between *mem* and *pe;* the insertion by a scribe of an *aleph;* and the dropping of an ם thought to be dittograph of *mem.* None of these errors is uncommon. This emendation gives an excellent sense (*cf.* Jer. xxxii. 40). The translation is:

*They tried me, yea they departed from me.*

The third *me* gives great force to the sentence.

PSALM XCVIII. 3.

*He hath remembered his mercy and his faithfulness to the house of Israel.*—A.V.

Here the LXX inserts "to Jacob," to the great improvement of the metre:

*He hath remembered his mercy to Jacob,*
*And his faithfulness to the house of Israel.*

This is a very small matter, and yet nothing is really small which throws light upon the condition of the text. Far too great weight has been attributed to the MSS., and too little importance to the versions, which, in spite of their grievous defects in scholarship, constantly give indications of a far earlier date in the history of the text.

PSALM CV. 27.

*They* [1] *set among them his signs,*
*And wonders in the land of Ham.*—R.V.

The reading of the versions seems preferable. The phrase in the first line, literally "the matters of his signs," seems peculiarly weak. It is possible that we should substitute במדבר ("in the wilderness"). The signs mentioned would thus be those which are recorded in Exod. iv. 8, as having been shown to Moses and Aaron before their return to Egypt.

PSALM CV. 28.

*He sent darkness, and made it dark;*
*And they rebelled not against his words.*—R.V.

"They rebelled not" has always been a difficulty. The LXX reads "they rebelled," but most of the other versions agree with the M.T. in inserting the "not." Some commentators refer the words to the Egyptians, others to Moses and Aaron; but neither explanation seems satisfactory. In place of מרו ("they rebelled") שמרו ("they observed") has found favour with recent editors, but there is nothing to show why the *shin* should have fallen out.

There are two difficulties, the presence of a "not," and the absence of a nominative to the verb "rebelled." Both these difficulties are removed by altering ולא מרו into ולאם מרו ("but the people (*i.e.* Egyptians)

[1] Some ancient versions have He.

rebelled "). It is suggested that a *mem* was dropped, because it was regarded as a dittograph.

Certainly this suggestion improves the sense, at the expense of the slightest possible interference with the text:

*He sent darkness, and made it dark,*
*But the people rebelled against his words.*

PSALM CVI. 2, 3.

*Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord,*
*Or shew forth all his praise?*
*Blessed are they that keep judgment*
*And he that doeth righteousness at all times.*—R.V.

The transition from the theme of the first couplet, the praise of God, to the blessedness of the righteous, the theme of the second couplet, is very abrupt. The same objection lies against the transition from the plural "they that keep judgment" to the singular "he that doeth righteousness." The revisers help out this transition by the insertion of an "and," and by so doing miss an otherwise obvious clue. The LXX had also done this by reading the plural עשׂי ("they that do") instead of עשׂה ("he that doeth"), though no reason can be given for the presence of the ה, except that it was present in the original.

There is no need of any consonantal change, and all that is necessary is to take אשׁרי, which has hitherto been regarded as "blessed," as the simple relative אשׁר ("who"), and to point the verb "keep" as the third person indicative. The sense will then be:

*Forasmuch as he keepeth judgment,*
*Doing righteousness at all times.*

By this simple change both the grammar and the meaning are restored. That the same change should effect both these ends is strongly in its favour.

PSALM CVI. 7.

*But were rebellious at the sea, even at the Red Sea.*—R.V.

This line can have little interest to the general reader, but it is of considerable importance to the textual critic. Literally translated it is:

*But they were disobedient upon the sea, at the Red Sea.*

The R.V. obscures this by repeating the same preposition. The editors recognise the difficulty, and conjecture עליון ("the Most High"), translating: "They were disobedient against the Most High at the Red Sea." This emendation gives a good sense, but, as any one can see, it is graphically unlikely, there being no other instance of confusion between a *mem* and a *nun;* and it being a fundamental principle of textual criticism that no emendation ought to be accepted unless graphically probable.

A reference to the LXX reveals the fact that they read *ἀναβαίνοντες, i.e.* "going up to," the Hebrew equivalent of which is עלים. The near presence of ים ("sea") at the end of the line induced the Masoretes to suppose that it was present earlier in the same line —hence the unsatisfactory grammar of this line, and its feebleness of meaning. The reading of the LXX improves both grammar and meaning; the latter, since it was at the approach to the Red Sea that the rebellion broke out (*cf.* Exod. xiv. 10), and at the end of their long march from Egypt:

*They rebelled as they came up to the Red Sea.*

PSALM CVII. 4.

*They wandered in the wilderness in a desert way;*
*They found no city of habitation.*—R.V.

The phrase "a desert way" is possible in English, because we can use the word "desert" as an adjective, but it cannot be so used in Hebrew. The LXX transfers

" way " to the second line, but this leaves the first line very feeble—" they wandered in the wilderness, in the desert." It is possible that for ישימון (" desert ") we should read ימישון (" they groped "),[1] and that the preposition ב should be transferred so that it stands before the word " way." This implies that the copyist was misled by the great likeness which certainly exists between these two words. The sense is much improved by this emendation :

*They wandered in the wilderness, they groped for a path ;*
*They found no city of habitation.*

PSALM CVII. 38–42 (39–41).

*He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly ;*
*And suffereth not their cattle to decrease.*
(Again) *they are minished and bowed down*
*Through oppression, trouble, and sorrow.*
*He poureth contempt upon princes,*
*And causeth them to wander in the waste, where there is no way.*
*Yet setteth he the needy on high from affliction,*
*And maketh him families like a flock.*
*The upright shall see this and be glad ;*
*And all iniquity shall stop her mouth.*—R.V.

The first couplet is the conclusion of a stanza, and has nothing to do with the eight lines which follow. The second couplet of this new stanza (a quotation from Job xii. 21, 24) is out of place, and should stand first in the stanza. The clue has been missed by the R.V., which attempts to connect the misplaced lines by inserting the word " again," quite without warrant from the Hebrew. A marginal sign, opposite the lines quoted from Job, appears to indicate that they are out of place. The cause of the mistake was doubtless that the word " decrease " occurs twice (misrendered " minish "

[1] Psalm cxv. 7.

on the second occasion), and that some copyist assumed that they should be placed in proximity to each other.

The stanza as restored consists of eight lines, four telling of the doom of the oppressors, followed by four which tell of the vindication of God's justice in His care for the pious poor.

## Psalm CIX.

Though the text of this psalm is in good condition, it has in my opinion been so grievously misunderstood that it is not outside the scope of this treatise to make another attempt to clear it from misconception. This will best be done by means of an analysis.

(a) *Verses* 1–5.

This section tells of the cruel attack made upon the Psalmist by his enemies. It will be noticed that the stress is laid upon what they have said, rather than upon anything which they have done. His own attitude has been one of resignation, and of kindness, for which he is rewarded with evil and hatred.

(b) *Verses* 6–15.

This section gives an account of the curses hurled at him by his adversaries. Not only does the mood change into the optative, *vice* the indicative, but there is a change of number from the plural, by which the enemies have hitherto been referred to, to the singular. This is surely a sufficient indication of an entirely new subject—the curses of his adversaries. The great feature of this curse is its almost comic comprehensiveness—not unlike that of the Cardinal Lord Archbishop of Rheims. This feature is of course intentional. The curse includes the Psalmist's office, his children, his wife, his goods, his orphans, his posterity, and even his predecessors, and comes to a fitting end with the disappearance of his whole clan from memory. There is a finality about this which marks the conclusion of the stanza.

(c) *Verses* 16–20.

This section contains the natural indignation of the Psalmist, and his stern reminder that "curses come home to roost." The opening words should be rendered "Forasmuch, therefore," etc.

(d) *Verses* 21–end.

Appeal of the Psalmist to God.

Thus this Psalm, so far from being "a cursing psalm," is a psalm against cursing.

PSALM CX. 5, 6.

*The Lord at thy right hand*
*Shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.*
*He shall judge among the nations,*
*He shall fill the places with dead bodies;*
*He shall strike through the head in many countries.*—
R.V.

The words "the places" have to be added, but the question is whether they can properly be added, or whether there is some corruption in the text. The stanza must be looked at as a perfect parallelism containing four, not five, lines. Of these lines the second and fourth begin with the same word, "He striketh." A glance at the first and third lines will show that they also may have originally begun with the same word; for if an *aleph* be added to the first word of line 3, both verses begin with the same word "The Lord."

What, then, about the word בגוים ("among the nations")? This may stand for גבים ("pits").

Thus the stanza will read as follows:

*The Lord at thy right hand,*
*Striketh through kings in the day of his wrath.*
*The Lord filleth the pits with dead bodies,*
*He striketh through the head over a wide land.*

The twofold repetition "Lord . . . Lord," "striketh . . . striketh," has splendid force. The couplet is now worthy of the rest of the psalm. Probably the original mistake was due to the unusual word "pits."

PSALM CXII. 4.

*Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness,*
(He is) *gracious, and full of compassion and righteous.*
—R.V.

The second line is ambiguous, since it may equally well, or perhaps equally badly, refer either to God or to the godly man. In either case the line is weak. I suggest that it should read ויצדיק צדיק, *i.e.* He is gracious and merciful, and "justifieth the righteous." The inward light of the first line is the divine approval spoken of in the second line.

PSALM CXV. 7.

*They have hands, but they handle not ;*
*Feet have they and walk not ;*
*They speak not through their throat ;*
*They that make them shall be like unto them.*—Lit. trans.

The objection to the text as it stands is that verse 7 contains three lines instead of two, and that the third line is out of connexion with the two previous lines, as seems to be noticed by the R.V., since it inserts a quite unwarranted "neither." Fortunately this passage is quoted in part in a later psalm, cxxxv. 17, and there the line "They that make them shall be like unto them" is preceded by the line "Yea, there is not any breath in their mouths."

Since a line is wanting in the present passage evidently this is the line required, and strange to say it exactly suits its new context. The passage will therefore read :

*They have hands, but they handle not ;*
*Feet have they, but they walk not ;*
*They speak not through their throat,*
*Yea, there is not any breath in their mouths.*
*They that make them shall be like unto them,* etc.

One more indication must be noted. Why, it may be asked, was this important line dropped ? The reason is that at the end of verse 6 occurs a line apparently

beginning with the same word "yea," though it really means a "nose"; and also containing a word very closely resembling the word used for "breath." Thus the line was dropped because the scribe was under the impression that he had already transcribed it!

PSALM CXVI. 2.

*Therefore will I call* (upon him) *as long as I live.*—R.V.

A very slight alteration improves the sense, and renders it unnecessary to insert the words "upon him." In place of וביומי, read ביום ("in the day that I called"). The psalm evidently refers to an event in the past. The alteration is confined to the removal of the *vav* from its present position before the *beth*, to a position after it. The translation will be:

*Because he inclined his ear to me,*
*In the day that I called.*

This alteration is confirmed by the use of the same word "called" in verse 4, where it is in the same tense as here, and refers to the past.

PSALM CXVI. 10.

*I believe, for I will speak,*
*I was greatly afflicted.*—R.V.

Many attempts have been made to understand this verse, but without apparent success. All that is needed is a redivision of the consonants, which gives the meaning,

*Shall I indeed speak wrong?*

The Psalmist is compelled to allow that his faith was in great peril.

PSALM CXVIII. 27.

*Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.*—R.V.

The commentators give strong reasons for supposing that this line is corrupt. *Chag* properly means a

festival or pilgrimage, not a sacrifice. In any case the horns of the altar were never used for such a purpose, and grammatically, the preposition ב (" to ") is never found with the verb translated " bind." Various suggestions have been made on the supposition that the word rendered cords may mean " boughs "—*e.g.* Cheyne, " bind the procession with branches, (step on) to the altar horns." But this seems no less open to objection than that which it displaces The passage is evidently corrupt, and must be dealt with by means of the usual methods. The ordinary use of the horns of the altar was for pouring libations, and it will be best to suppose that this is so here.

Now, supposing the usual mistake of ח for ה, the middle quartet of consonants would make הגביע = the bowl; *cf.* Exod. xxv. 31; Jer. xxxv. 5—used also in Gen. xliv. of Joseph's cup. The last triplet of letters בתם gives " liquid measures." What remains is to deal with the first group.

Supposing the present reading in the M.T. text to have ousted the original reading, what is now needed is to restore a verb applicable to pouring libations. This verb might be מלאו (" fill "), מ having been turned into ם, and ל into ר. These changes are both not unusual.

The translation will then be:

*Fill the bowl with measures* (of wine)
*Unto the horns of the altar.*

This is avowedly speculative—but the existing text seems desperate.

PSALM CXIX. 91.

*They abide this day according to thy ordinances;*
*For all things are thy servants.*—R.V.

The expression " all things are thy servants " seems without a parallel. The plural " servants " does not occur elsewhere in this psalm, whereas the singular

"servant" occurs some ten times. If instead of הכל ("everything") we read הבל ("vanity"), human frailty is contrasted with the fixity of nature. The line would run:

*But thy servant is vanity* (*or*, a breath).

This would prepare a suitable point of departure for the thought of the next line:

*Unless thy law had been my delight*
*I should have perished in my low estate.*

As the text now stands the transition seems somewhat abrupt.

PSALM CXXVII. 2.

(For) *so he giveth his beloved sleep.*—R.V.

The word rendered "sleep" or "in sleep" is a solecism; also, as Dr. Kirkpatrick points out, some word is needed to express the actual blessing conferred upon the saints. Such a combination of difficulties commonly points to the presence of textual corruption. My suggestion is that a *daleth* has been dropped, owing to two *daleths* having preceded it, and that an *aleph* has been inserted after the manner of the scribes in such cases.

This gives the word דשן ("treasure").

If thought necessary, the *nun* may be transferred to the verb "give," and the *caph* would then be pointed as "for."

The translation would thus be:

*For he giveth his beloved treasure.*

PSALM CXXIX. 4.

*The Lord is righteous,*
*He hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.*—A.V.

The revisers have done their best to make some kind of parallelism, but the translation should be "Jehovah

the righteous hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked," and then the absence of parallelism is obvious. A real parallelism demands that the words "righteous" and "wicked" should both refer to men, and that God's action in regard to these two kinds of men should be different and opposite. The remedy is a simple one. The line was originally written : יהוה הצדיק צדיק,

*The Lord vindicateth the righteous.*

The omission is of course due to a supposed reduplication. This restoration at once improves both sense and metre.

PSALM CXXXVII. 5.

*If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,*
*Let my right hand forget* (her cunning).—R.V.

The inserted words are absolutely required by the sense, and yet there is no justification for inserting them. The LXX and Vulgate read the word translated "forget" as passive, "Let my right hand be forgotten." This is the only meaning to be obtained from the consonants as they stand, and yet it is intolerably weak. These consonants are תשכח. It is obvious that what was omitted is a second כח, meaning "strength"; *cf.* Job xxx. 2, "The strength (or, cunning) of their hands." What has happened is, of course, that a scribe dropped this word, under the mistaken belief that a previous copyist had repeated a syllable in error.

PSALM CXXXVIII. 2.

*I will worship towards thy holy temple*
*And give thanks unto thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth,*
*For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.*
—R.V.

As the editors have acknowledged, this last line is singularly feeble. Various suggestions have been made, viz. that by the dropping of *resh* "thy word" should

be read "thy truth," or that "thy word" should be regarded as a gloss. The latter suggestion may be accepted. But the question has yet to be asked why the gloss came to be added. My suggestion is that the real object of the verb "magnified" has dropped out owing to a supposed reduplication, and that it was שם ("name"); and that the line originally was as follows:

*For thou hast magnified thy name above every name.*

If this be allowed, I suggest that St. Paul has preserved the true reading in Phil. ii. 9, "The name which is above every name"; a phrase which looks very like a quotation, especially if, with Lightfoot, we retain the definite article τό. I owe this suggestion to Bishop Hare. His book on the text of the Psalms was published in 1736, and I am glad to be able to say that his views as to the condition of the text remarkably confirm my own.

PSALM CXXXIX. 16.

*Thine eyes did see mine unperfect substance,*
*And in thy book were all* (my members) *written,*
*Which day by day were fashioned,*
*While as yet there was none of them.*—R.V.

R.V. mg. *They were all written, even the days that were ordained.*

The translation given in the R.V. text gives the general sense of the passage, but labours under the serious disqualification of having to insert a wholly hypothetical nominative plural "my members," extracted from the singular substantive "substance." The marginal version is clumsy in the extreme, "all of them" preceding the subject "days" which has not yet been referred to. This rendering can only be regarded as a desperate attempt on the part of the commentators to avoid the difficulty apparent in the text.

The crux of the passage is the word גלמי ("my substance"), which must now be considered. Against it is of course the damning fact that it is a singular noun followed by a plural verb. A further objection is that it is a highly technical word, and that it does not occur elsewhere in Biblical Hebrew, while the sense given to it in the LXX, *ὑπόστασις*, is an anachronism.

Thus we are driven to look for a word which shall conform to two conditions—it must be plural, and it must closely resemble גלמי. Such a word is found in גרמי ("my bones"); *cf.* Prov. xvii. 22. The confusion between *lamed* and *resh* is not infrequent, and it is obviously probable.

The verse will then read quite simply:

*Thine eyes did see my bones,*
*And in thy book were all of them written:*
*Day after day were they fashioned,*
*Though as yet there was none of them.*

PSALM CXL. 9.

*Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked;*
*Further not his evil device;* (lest) *they exalt themselves.*
*Selah.*
*As for the head of them that compass me about,*
*Let the mischief of their own lips cover them.*—R.V.

The insertion of the word "lest" is indefensible. The verb "they exalt themselves" has somehow got out of place, and should stand after, rather than before, the Selah. It is not wanted where it stands, and it is greatly wanted in the next line, which lacks a verb. This will reduce the passage into coherence:

*Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked;*
*Further not his evil device. Selah.*
*They that compass me about lift up the head,*
*Let the mischief of their own lips cover them.*

PSALM CXLI. 4–7.

4. *Incline not my heart to any evil thing,*
*To be occupied in deeds of wickedness*
*With men that work iniquity:*
*And let me not eat of their dainties.*

5. *Let the righteous smite me,* (it shall be) *a kindness,*
*And let him reprove me,* (it shall be as) *oil upon the head;*
*Let not my head refuse it:*
*For even in their wickedness shall my prayer continue.*

6. *Their judges are thrown down by the sides of the rock;*
*And they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.*
*As when one plougheth and cleaveth the earth,*
*Our* [1] *bones are scattered at the grave's mouth.*—R.V.

The translation given above represents an attempt to make the best of a bad business. The crux of the difficulty lies in verse 5. That the suggested explanation is untenable is manifest from the great number of words which have to be supplied, and still more from the entire inappropriateness of the last line, with its quite inconceivable reference to the wickedness of the righteous. The connexion in idea with verse 6 is hopeless. The general sense of the passage must be our point of departure. It is obviously a warning against admitting the ungodly persecutor into intimacy—"Let me not eat of their dainties." Starting from this idea, it is evident that verse 5 must give the reason for this exclusion, and that any reference to rebukes given by the righteous to the writer of the psalm is utterly out of place. A very slight alteration of vocalisation will get rid of the personal pronouns in the first line of verse 5. Both verbs end with a *nun*, which must be taken as the nasalised ending of the third person plural

[1] R.V. mg. Some ancient authorities "their."

(*cf.* Psalm lxxiv. 6, where the actual word occurs). Further, חָסָד must be pointed as חָסִיד ("the godly") and *vav* dropped. This will give the required sense:

*They smite the righteous, they condemn the godly.*

For dealing with the next line we have an invaluable, but strangely unappreciated, assistance from the LXX, which renders

*But let not the oil of the wicked anoint my head.*

In place of the first ראש ("head") they evidently read רשע ("wicked"), but, as in many other cases, the juxtaposition of two similar words has led to their being made identical. With this reading the next line is in full agreement:

*For my prayers shall be against their iniquities.*

The clue to the whole passage is evidently the LXX reading "the oil of the wicked." This at first sight seems a strange phrase, but it evidently refers to the custom of anointing guests before the meal; *cf.* Psalm xxiii. 5, and our Lord's words:

"My head with oil thou didst not anoint."

The verb יִנִּי (LXX *λιπανάτω*) may be from נוה ("adorn"), but the meaning given by the LXX is clearly correct.

The main evidence in favour of this reconstruction of the text is that it follows the most ancient authorities, and involves very slight changes. The chief proof must, however, be that it restores the whole passage from absolute incoherence to a real continuity of thought. This will appear from the retranslation of the whole passage, which must now be put before the reader:

*Incline not my heart to any evil thing,*
*To be occupied in deeds of wickedness,*
*With men that work iniquity;*
*And let me not eat of their dainties.*
*They smite the righteous, and condemn the godly:*

*Let not the oil of the wicked anoint my head,*
*But let my prayer be against their evil deeds.*
*Let their judges be hurled from the cliffs of the rocks,*
*That they themselves may hear my words, for they are sweet.*
*As when one plougheth and cleaveth the earth,*
*Our bones lie scattered at the mouth of the pit.*

The last line may be "Let their bones," but it seems best to adhere to the text, and regard the reference as being to the persecution of the godly. This fits best with what follows, "mine eyes look unto thee, O Lord," etc.

PSALM CXLIII. 6.

*I spread forth my hands unto thee:*
*My soul* (thirsteth) *after thee, as a weary land. Selah.*
—R.V.

This is literally "my soul is towards thee as a thirsty land." The commentators generally are content to remark that a verb "thirsteth" must be supplied. It is not denied that Hebrew, especially lyric Hebrew, leaves a good deal to the imagination of the reader, but when it comes to having to add the main verb, the demand seems excessive Still the text might possibly stand, were it not that there is another grave objection against it, viz. the occurrence of the word Selah. This is, with the exception of those found in one particular psalm (Psalm cxl.), the only Selah to be found in the Fourth and Fifth Books of Psalms. More than this, there does not seem any need for it, since generally speaking, it is an expression rather of triumph or of fierce indignation than of calm resignation and trust. Thus the Selah is certainly doubtful.

Here comes in the strange fact already remarked in dealing with certain previous psalms (*cf.* note on Psalm lv. 7–9), that Selah seems to have a peculiar attraction to any word meaning wilderness, and that in these contexts there is reason to believe that it is a misreading for the word "barrenness." Now the wilderness

context is certainly present here, and here also is the Selah. The natural inference is that it is not Selah at all, but that it is the same word "barrenness." Another slight alteration is needed, viz. the restoration of "land" to its proper place, from which it had to be removed when מלח was misread as סלה. The word עיפה hitherto regarded as an adjective "thirsty," now becomes the main verb of the sentence, "thirsteth" (*cf.* Jer. iv. 31, "My soul fainteth").

Thus the line will now read:

*My soul thirsteth for thee like a barren land.*

This emendation gives an excellent sense; removes an inconvenient Selah; supplies a principal verb, which is very much wanted. Its chief significance is, however, found in the confirmation which it gives to the treatment of the previous passages in which Selah occurs in close connexion with the mention of the wilderness. This is all the more remarkable because the particular word used for wilderness is different in each passage, while the word "barren" gives excellent sense in them all. In each passage, moreover, the word Selah is meaningless.

PSALM CXLIII. 9.

*Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies:*
*I flee unto thee to hide me.*—R.V.

But, as the margin allows, the literal Hebrew is "unto thee have I hidden." This is generally given up as impossible. The emendation is very simple, an inversion of the order of two consonants of the word hidden, which gives the appropriate word "my shelter." These two consonants are *caph* and *samech*, which are so frequently confused that here each of them is taken for the other:

*Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies:*
*In thee is my shelter.*

PSALM CXLIV. 11, 12.

*Rescue me, and deliver me out of the hand of strangers,*
*Whose mouth speaketh vanity,*
*And their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.*
*When our sons shall be as plants grown up in their youth;*
*And our daughters,* etc.—R.V.

"When" (אשר), which the R.V. repeats in subsequent verses, is quite meaningless; literally it should mean "we whose sons," but this is impossible, as there is no antecedent. Thus the word seems corrupt. It should be noticed that it undoubtedly occurs in the second line, "*whose* mouth," and this may have led the copyist to suppose that a somewhat similar word occurring two lines later must also be thus read.

What is needed is a verb meaning "grow," to take the place of the inserted words "shall be"; and it is also essential that this word should so closely resemble אשר as to have given occasion for confusion with it—fairly drastic conditions! Such a word, suitable alike in meaning and in form, is found in the word רשא ("be luxuriant"). A very similar mistake with regard to this very word is found in Prov. viii. 26, where it is confounded with the word ראש ("a head"). Evidently, therefore, it was an unfamiliar word, and as such had a very slight chance of transmission. Fortunately, however, when such mistakes occur, some indication is usually left that all is not right with the transmitted text.

The couplet may now resume its original form:

*Our sons flourish as plants grown great in their youth.*

# PART III

## ISAIAH

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# CHAPTER X

## CRITICAL STUDIES IN ISAIAH

THERE is little or nothing to be said with regard to the method pursued, for it is, in all its main features, identical with that employed in dealing with the Books of Proverbs and Psalms. Whatever good results have been attained go to establish that method on a still wider foundation. The difference of subject makes no difference to the detection of mistakes arising from the likeness of particular letters of the alphabet. The old offenders still continue their career of crime, and, so far as I am aware, there are no new delinquents.

There is, however, one material difference between the text of Isaiah and that of the books previously treated. The great importance of the prophecy, and its intimate connexion with the hopes and fortunes of the Jewish nation, have, if we are to believe the higher critics, led to the expansion of the work of the first Isaiah by later writers, who had imbibed his spirit. The same cause has certainly influenced the history of the text, but with less happy results, and the scribes have ventured to attempt more in the way of emendation and explanation than in their dealings with anp other book. A book constantly read in the synagogue, and closely bound up with the national aspirations, possessed a vast importance to posterity. When, as not infrequently happened, passages of serious importance were only partially intelligible, the scribe naturally did his best, usually, however, from the standpoint of criticism, his worst, in order to arrive at some more or less comprehensible meaning. Sometimes considerable

additions were made to the text by later writers desirous of claiming the authority of Isaiah against later abuses. These additions, perhaps less extensive than some critics have assumed, have little or nothing to do with the lower criticism of the text, and they are rarely referred to in the present treatise, which is concerned with emending the text, leaving matters of authorship to those better qualified to deal with them. The work of the textual critic is sufficiently arduous without entering fields appropriated by others.

I have to deal with the rectification of the text as transmitted, and it must be allowed that this text is in a very bad condition, and that the difficulties have been largely increased by the attempts previously made to emend them. The text of Proverbs has suffered only very little from subsequent interference, being a book of little ecclesiastical importance. The text of the Psalms, though frequently very corrupt, has for the most part escaped uncritical emendation by early scribes, for the reason, that whether correct or incorrect, it had become familiarised by constant use in public worship. Our own experience in relation to the Psalter is proof positive how strangely the human mind, drugged by familiarity, will complacently sing what is absolutely incomprehensible, and apparently derive spiritual benefit from the exercise. This tendency, no doubt, operated in other days, and the result has been that the corruptions in the Book of Psalms have for the most part escaped premature attempts at emendation, and sufficient clues remain to make restoration possible.

The very opposite is the case when it comes to dealing with the text of such a book as Isaiah. Prophets were preachers, and their appeal was mainly to the reason. When, therefore, anything has gone wrong with the text, which is of course as liable to the same errors in transmission as any other text, an attempt will be made to emend the mistake. The trumpet has given an uncertain sound, and something must be done

to mend, or more probably to mar, the trumpet. The importance of a book giving a comprehensive survey of the principles of the theocracy, and of the extension of the theocracy to proselytes from heathenism, made it absolutely essential that this book should convey a coherent message. One would have supposed that this absorbing necessity would have made the text of Isaiah unusually accurate, and doubtless the successive scribes felt their responsibility. Unfortunately what was lacking was the perception of what was wrong, and a scholarship adequate to discover a remedy and to deal with the special difficulties presented by the Hebrew alphabet. Even in the absence of any textual corruption, so much depended upon the capacity of the scribe that blunders were inevitable. The correct division of the consonants into word groups, and the correct vocalisation, depended entirely upon the ability of the particular scribe. The modern scholar has not always fared much better than his predecessors, and many passages have been regarded as hopeless, which nevertheless are, so far as concerns their consonants, perfectly correct. How much more was there scope for error when there had been faulty transmission, probably due to some quite simple confusion of consonants! This constant source of error has been inadequately estimated by modern scholars, and if the present volume marks an advance in criticism, it is merely because this possibility has been always envisaged, and because no emendation has been allowed which does not appear graphically probable. The ancient scribe does not seem even to have realised that the script presented any danger at all—and allowed himself a liberty of emendation which has made confusion worse confounded.

It is evident from all this that the critical restoration of the Isaianic text is no easy matter. Had I undertaken the work without previous experience, I should have been doomed to failure. And yet most of the commentators on Isaiah have concentrated their

attention upon the errors incidental to this particular text, without being aware that every Old Testament Book has suffered from the same cause. Ignorance of this fact has made success impossible. The phenomena of error must be studied where correction is easier, and not until the liability to error of the scribes has been fully grasped, can the more recondite study of the Isaianic text be entered upon with any hope of success.

Something has indeed been done, especially by Dr. Kittel, and I am glad to feel that much with which I should otherwise have had to deal may be taken as already reduced to something like order. I do not often refer to his work, not because I think it unimportant, but because I may assume a knowledge of his text on the part of scholars. I reserve to myself such passages as, in my opinion, have never as yet yielded up their secrets. I must not presume to pass any opinion as to the value of my emendations, further than to say that if they are indeed of value, the improvement must go to the credit, not of myself, but of the method, already seen in operation in dealing with the Books of Proverbs and Psalms. When I first wrote this introduction I had reluctantly to confess that I had hoped for a greater measure of success than that which I had been able to gain. I then, at his request, sent my findings to the venerable Dr. Charles Jaeger of Strasbourg University, than whom no abler critic is anywhere to be found. During their absence I have steadily continued my labours, and I cannot but be thankful for the delay. Now I can only say that I have found more than I ever expected to find, and I trust that my work may receive a patient hearing from those best qualified to pass a verdict; and that, if worthy, what I have here brought forward may lay a sound foundation for the textual criticism of the noblest of all the prophecies, and of the book which more than any other was the Bible of our Lord.

ISAIAH III. 3.

*The cunning artificer.*—R.V.

A reference to the Oxford Dictionary (p. 361) will reveal the fact that nothing is really known about the obscure word חרשים, unless, which is very unlikely, it means "artificers." I would suggest that the true reading is חדשים, a word which occurs in Isaiah xlvii. 13 in a precisely parallel phrase, and is, literally translated, "instructed in the new moons," having the sense of astrologers.

Thus the meaning here would be "skilled in astrology," and would be naturally followed by a reference to "enchanters." The confusion between *resh* and *daleth* is ubiquitous.

ISAIAH IV. 5.

*And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory* (shall be) *a defence.*—A.V.

This obscure phrase is not much bettered by the R.V., which translates "Over all the glory shall be spread a canopy." There has been no reference to any glory inherent in Jerusalem, but to its purgation by divine chastisements, and to its protection both by night and day in terms suggested by reminiscence of the Exodus. The immediate context is "the flaming fire by night." This supplies the needful clue.

The word חפה ("canopy") is confused in Psalm xvi. 3 with the pronoun המה ("they"), and its restoration gives the excellent sense:

"To the saints upon earth he is a defence."

Here it is the other way, and it is חפה which is the offender—having cast out the true reading חמה ("the sun"). The "for" should now be translated as "yea," and "upon" should appear as "above."

The sentence will then read :

*Yea, above all the glory of the sun.*

It should be mentioned that the confusion between *mem* and *pe* is very frequent, though I am not aware that it has been previously observed. It is inherently probable, since the only difference between the two letters is confined to the small down stroke which is plain in *mem* and curved in *pe*.

This emendation gives a very beautiful meaning, viz. that the true servant of God, even though passing through the darkness, can see more clearly than others do in the full blaze of the sunshine of prosperity. Thus the evidence for this reading is not merely graphical, but experimental.

## Isaiah V. 1.

*Let me sing for my beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard.*—R.V.

It has been commonly felt that "a song of my beloved" can scarcely be right, since it must, I suppose, mean "one of his own songs." The emendation "a love song" does not seem any more appropriate. My suggestion rests upon the fact, frequently observed elsewhere, that when two Hebrew words are nearly alike in form, there is a tendency that they will become identical during the long process of transmission.

Hence in place of דוד ("friend" or "love"), I suggest that the original reading was דור. This word means a generation or period, and often means a former age. Thus rendered it would be "a song of long ago."

## Isaiah V. 22 to end of the Chapter.

The editors have seen that the refrain in verse 26, "For all this his hand is not turned away," etc., stamps this section as belonging to the section beginning ix. 8,

"The Lord hath sent a Word unto Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel"—since this section has this special refrain in verses ix. 12, 17, 22, and also x. 4.

This conjecture is confirmed by the reference in x. 3 to "the desolation which shall come from far," which is abrupt as it stands, and finds its proper introduction in v. 26, "And He will lift up an ensign to the nations from far," etc.

Thus there has evidently been a transference of v. 25–30 from the later into the earlier chapter.

What has not been hitherto noticed is that there has been a converse transference from the earlier into the later chapter. This must now be shown.

There is evidently a break in sense between the woe directed against strong drink in v. 22, and the reference to injustice in the next verse. This break is completely mended by transferring x. 1, 2, into the earlier chapter, which will then read as follows:

"Woe unto them which are mighty to drink wine,
And men of strength to mingle strong drink.
*Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees,*
*And that write grievousness which they have prescribed,*
*To turn aside the needy from judgment,*
*And to take away the right from the poor of my people;*
*That widows may be their prey,*
*And that they may rob the fatherless:*
Which justify the wicked for reward,
And take away the righteousness of the righteous from him."

The lines in italics show what has been introduced from the later chapter, and now evidently stands in its proper place. The passage ends with the words:

"And despised the words of the Holy One of Israel."

It will be noticed that there are now seven "Woes" in the present chapter, and five refrains in the tenth chapter. The transference seems due to the mixing of the order of sheets in an early MS.

ISAIAH VI. 13.

*And if there be yet a tenth in it, it shall again be eaten up,*[1] *as a terebinth and as an oak, whose stock remaineth when they are felled; so the holy seed is the stock thereof.*—R.V.

This passage is meaningless, for it has two inconsistent meanings. If Isaiah is teaching, as appears from his son's name Shear Jashub, that there should be a holy remnant, how can it be said that its destiny is to be consumed? Evidently, therefore, the difficulty is connected with the word לבער ("to be burned," or "to be eaten"). My suggestion is that there has been the common confusion of *daleth* with *resh*, and that the true reading is לעבדי and the translation: "And it shall become my servant."

I need hardly say that, whenever there has been the confusion of one letter with another, the invariable method employed by the scribes is an alteration in the order of the consonants. They never appear to suspect the real cause, the similarity of two consonants. Perhaps this is too severe, for of course, if they had realised where the mistake really lay, they would have rectified it, and there would be no evidence left to show that there had been any mistake!

It will be seen that if this suggestion be correct the metaphor does not begin until the word "as."

The translation will now be quite simple:

*But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall turn again and become my servant; as a terebinth and an oak, whose stock remaineth when they are felled; so the holy seed is the stock thereof.*

The last sentence sounds very like an editorial note, and it will be found that such notes are frequently added in this book.

When I first made this emendation, I was not greatly enamoured of it, but, on further consideration, I cannot

[1] Or, *burnt.*

discover any other way of finding a definite meaning. This early reference to the idea of Israel as God's servant is, if correct, highly interesting.

The " tenth " is used in Lev. xxvii. 32, as the sign that the whole of the flock is in reality the property and gift of God. The same applies (*cf.* verse 30) to the fruit of a tree.

ISAIAH VII. 8, 9.

*For the head of Syria is Damascus,*
*And the head of Damascus is Rezin :*
*And within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken in pieces that it be not a people.*
*And the head of Ephraim is Samaria,*
*And the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son.*

It is difficult to see what consolation King Ahaz could have received from this oracle, in the first place by learning that his pressing enemy should be broken in pieces long after his own death, and in the second place by being told, what he already knew, that Rezin and Pekah were the chiefs of the two countries from which he feared invasion.

The first difficulty has been removed by the editors, who point out that the reference to Ephraim is a gloss ; that it interferes with what is evidently a startling epigram ; and was no doubt added to give the point to the message which it so obviously lacks.

The second difficulty remains. I cannot see light in the usual explanation, which is that " Their project will fail, for Rezin is head of Syria, and Pekah head of Ephraim. These are their divinely appointed spheres, they have no control over Judah." But why, it may be asked, is there this reference to the capital cities of both nations, a fact which this explanation quite overlooks, but which is certainly of importance ? A stronger objection is certainly this, that the inference supposed to be drawn is by no means on the surface, and not at all likely to have appealed to Ahaz.

Thus it seems probable that there is some fault in transmission. The important word common to all four lines is the word "head," ראש. I would suggest that we have here the common confusion between *resh* and *daleth*, and that we should read a part of the verb רוש ("trample" or "devastate"). This verb is frequently used for the devastation of war. We may read either the present or the future. There is a slight difficulty over the *vav* if we read the future ירוש. This may be variously explained, *e.g.* by the licence elsewhere taken by the scribes to interchange the two silent letters *aleph* and *vav*. But there seems a still better explanation, for in Isaiah xxviii. 28 we have the form ארש, and it may be that it was used here. If so, the transition to ראש would be almost, if not quite, inevitable.

We may now pass to the meaning, which is sufficiently striking:

*For Damascus shall harry Syria,*
*And Rezin shall harry Damascus.*
*And Samaria shall harry Ephraim,*
*And the son of Remaliah shall harry Samaria.*

This is a message that carries its meaning upon the face of it, "You have two countries of which you are afraid. You need no longer fear them, for civil war will break out in both of them, in each case a revolt of the Capital against the country and its ruler." We do not know enough of the internal history of Syria to know whether this prediction was fulfilled, but Pekah was slain by a conspiracy led by Hoshea who succeeded him, 2 Kings xv. 30.

**Isaiah VII. 15, 16.**

*Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.*—A.V.

If we can accept the LXX rendering, πρὶν ἢ γνῶναι, the preposition, now rendered "that," may bear the

meaning "until"; and then the passage may stand. But I do not think that this rendering is possible, and a great many critics prefer to cut out the whole of the first sentence. I cannot agree with either method. I keep the preposition to its ordinary meaning, and I accept all that part of the first sentence which is not repeated in the second sentence.

I am enabled to do this by means of an emendation confined to the single letter *daleth*, which I regard as concealing the letter *resh*, with which it is so constantly confused. This turns לדעתו ("that he may know") into לרעתו ("in order to feed him"), or, in other words, "for his nourishment."

Now supposing that in place of this word the early scribes read "that he may know," they would be faced by the difficulty that there was no object to the verb "know," and that an object must be supplied from the context. Could they have done better than supply the words:

*to refuse the evil and choose the good,*

these words being already present in the second half of the sentence?

We may now take the passage as it will stand, with the omission of the gloss, and with the change of a *daleth* into a *resh*:

*Butter and honey shall he eat for his nourishment, but before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou fearest shall be forsaken.*

The meaning of the sign is now manifest. A child was to be born, who should be a pledge of divine assistance. For his earliest years he should eat the casual food of the outcast, clotted milk and honey from bees' nests, but before he arrived at being able to take notice, the danger and privation would be over, and Syria and Samaria would be deserted by their kings. This is precisely the message given to Ahaz in verses 7 to 9,

a message which has also suffered from interpolation. There is no interference with the traditional prophetic meaning, for the Child Jesus who shared our privations is the pledge of our deliverance.

ISAIAH VII. 24, 25.

> *With arrows and with bow shall one come thither; because all the land shall be briers and thorns. And all the hills that were digged with the mattock, thou shalt not come thither for fear of briers and thorns, but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of sheep.*—R.V.

That the R.V. is by no means satisfied with this rendering is clear from the alternatives given in the margin; and it is evident that there is serious corruption. What is quite clear is that there is here a picture of desolation, and it is therefore very unlikely that all that is intended in the second part of the verse is the replacement of arable land by pasture. Something much more serious is intended. This is clear from the mention of bow and arrows for which no use is specified. This gives the clue to the passage, since it demands the presence of wild beasts. It is not difficult to discover their traces. The לא ("not") conceals לביא ("lioness"), and יראת ("fear") conceals אריה ("lion"). The mistaken introduction of the word "fear" has led to an interpolation, quite in the manner of the scribes, of a source of fear, and this was supplied from the context which twice mentions "briers and thorns."

The verse as restored will thus be:

> *The lioness and the lion shall come there.*

This suggestion receives a strange confirmation from the word rendered "treading," which has been hitherto taken of the pasturage of sheep, for in Mic. v. 7 this word is used of the attack of lions upon sheep:

> *As a young lion among the flocks of sheep who, if he go through, treadeth down and teareth in pieces.*

The word "sending forth" may equally well mean "scattering."

Thus the whole sentence will read:

*The lioness and the lion shall come there,*
*And it shall be for the scattering of oxen and the rending of sheep.*

Now we know why it was not safe to approach without bow and arrows!

ISAIAH VIII. 19.

*Should not a people seek unto their God? On behalf of the living should* (they seek unto) *the dead?*—R.V.

The interpolated words show that there is some uncertainty in the text. The doubtful word is בעד ("on behalf of"), a word which has been peculiarly unfortunate in its transmission; *cf.* my note on Prov. vi. 26. Here there can be very little doubt that we should read בעו. This verb is used of inquiring of a prophet, Isaiah xxi. 12. The word is rare, and, therefore, likely to be missed. The slightest lengthening of the top stroke in a *vav* renders that letter liable to be read as a *daleth*.

The sentence will now read:

*Shall the living inquire of the dead?*

ISAIAH VIII. 21.

*And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry.*—R.V.

There is no word to which "it" can possibly refer, and the inference has hitherto been that this is a fragment, and that it originally belonged to a sentence containing the word "land." This shows the danger of making literary inferences from an imperfectly revised text.

The solution is a very usual one, the dropping of letters because they happened to come close together.

What I believe to have been originally written is עבר בערבה.

*They* (lit. *he*) *pass through a desert.*

This was reduced to עבר בה by the dropping of the three letters which had occurred in the previous word.

ISAIAH X. 5.

*O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, the staff in their hand is mine indignation.*—A.V.

The R.V. renders "the staff in whose hand is mine indignation." This rendering needs "hands," which is the reading of the Vulgate. Anyhow the verse both in the Hebrew and English is terribly clumsy. My suggestion is the exact converse of viii. 19, viz. a *vav* in place of a *daleth*, ביום ("in the day of") *vice* בידם ("in their hand(s)"). This alteration gives a much stronger sense:

*O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger,*
*And he is the staff in the day of my wrath.*

The idea is that Assyria itself is God's means of chastisement, and the sense is much weakened by any reference to the staff as that with which the Assyrians smite Israel.

ISAIAH X. 29.

*They have taken up their lodging at Geba.*—R.V.

The sense is perfectly right, but it cannot be got out of the words, for, as the R.V. margin allows, the real rendering should be "Geba is our lodging." The revisers endeavour to show that this may stand by inserting the wholly illegitimate words "they cry." The plain fact is that the text reads לנו ("to us"), whereas what is needed is obviously למו ("to them"). Why not make the alteration? The answer is decisive: there is no graphical likeness between *mem* and *nun*.

The value of keeping to this rule will now appear. The true reading is מלון ילינו. This is literally "They lodge a lodging," and the exact phrase occurs in Joshua iv. 3, "Leave them in the lodging where ye shall lodge." The translation of the R.V. is therefore perfectly right. This is a small matter, and I only refer to it in proof of the accuracy needful for success in textual criticism.

ISAIAH XIV. 2.

> *And the peoples shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them for servants and for handmaids: and they shall take them captive, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.*—R.V.

Regardless of grammar, I venture to ask, "Who takes who"? The peoples can only be the foreign nations. This makes a strange dislocation, for the last sentence of the previous verse speaks of strangers: "the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob."

Obviously, therefore, עַמִּים ("peoples") is wrong, and the reading should be עִמָּם ("with them"). At once the sentence becomes consecutive:

*And they* (Israelites) *shall take them with them, and bring them to their place* (Jerusalem), *and the house of Israel shall possess them as servants,* etc.

ISAIAH XIV. 19.

> *But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch,* (and as) *the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet thou shalt not be joined to them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land and slain thy people.*—A.V.

This passage needs careful consideration, as casting a lurid light upon the treatment accorded to the text.

The R.V., as is its wont, is content with merely verbal alterations, which while they may be said to improve the rhythm of the translation evade the obvious difficulties. Its translation is as follows:

*But thou art cast forth away from thy sepulchre like an abominable branch, clothed with the slain, that are thrust through with the sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under foot,* etc.

"Clothed with the slain" is at least as enigmatic as the previous rendering "and as the raiment of the slain," and is certainly no improvement.

German critics emend by means of the LXX, which is nothing better than a paraphrase, and may be translated:

*But thou shalt be cast upon the mountains as an abominable carcase, along with many dead thrust through with swords, which go down into Hades. As a garment stained with blood shall not be clean, so shalt thou not be clean, because thou hast destroyed thy land and hast slain thy people.*

It is evident that no emendations resting on such a precarious basis are worthy of consideration. Kittel, however, makes some use of it—he replaces "as a branch" by "as a carcase," eliminates "as a carcase trodden under foot" as a gloss, and places "they that go down to the stones of the pit" before the later words "Thou shalt not be joined with them."

Dr. Glazebrook's rendering is based upon German criticism, and reads as follows:

*But thou art flung down among the slain,*
*Among those that are pierced with the sword,*
*That go down to the floor of the pit*
*Like a carcase trodden underfoot.*
(How art thou shut out) *from thy tomb,*
*Loathed like an abortive birth,*
(How thou liest all unhonoured)
*Clothed* (with shame)!

(As for thy fathers) thou mayest not be joined
*With them in the grave ;*
*Because thou hast destroyed thy land,*
*Thou hast slain thy people.*

All that can be said of the above rendering is, that if it is to be accepted, there is an end to all real textual criticism, and the Isaianic text had better be treated like this hapless king, and be left to welter in its blood.

Prof. Peake seems to think this, for referring to a suggested emendation of the same kind as Dr. Glazebrook's, he remarks, "This is a largely conjectural restoration, but it gives a good sense, and avoids the difficulties raised by the present text. *Something like this is very probably right.*" This is a depressing conclusion, for criticism can hardly expect traditionalists accustomed to regard the M.T. as infallible to accept emendations of this dubious character.

An attempt must now be made to show that there is no need to have recourse to such drastic expedients, and that while the M.T. is certainly defective it is capable of restoration.

It must be observed in the first place that the difficulty of the passage centres around a single word, or more accurately, a single group of consonants, hitherto regarded as a single word, viz. the three consonants לבש which have been taken to mean "clothing" or "clothed." If these consonants are omitted what remains may be rendered :

*Those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, go down to the stones of the pit. As a carcase trodden under feet thou shalt not be joined with them in burial. Because thou hast destroyed thy land and slain thy people.*

This is a fact of the highest significance. The comparison, or rather contrast, between the unburied king and other slain warriors who had received burial has nothing whatever to do with raiment, and when this

supposed reference is omitted the passage reads consecutively. Must this group of letters be simply dropped as a gloss? This cannot be allowed, since, as I have often had to point out, the presence of supposed glosses has to be explained before we can venture upon their omission, and no such explanation is possible here.

There is another alternative—the suspicious letters stand at the beginning of the second sentence, for the words "and as" are wholly without warrant. My suggestion is that their proper place is *at the end of the first sentence.*

There are two possible ways of accounting for the early mistake, both depending upon a mistake frequently made by scribes, and pointed out two centuries ago by Bishop Hare in his books on the Psalms, viz. that when two identical or similar words or consonants stand in close proximity, a scribe, working mechanically, is very liable to omit one of the groups. Thus in the present passage the true reading may be (1) לבושה ("shamefully"), the ה having been dropped because the word which followed began with an ה; or (2) לבוש בשת ("clothed with shame"), a suggestion made by certain critics, though so far as I know without any explanation of the omission. This explanation is the likeness of two adjacent syllables, the second of which was dropped; it is of course always the second in such cases.

The difference between these two suggestions is so slight that it hardly matters which is adopted. The phrase "clothed with shame" occurs Psalm xxxv. 26; cix. 29; Job viii. 22.

It will be observed that the changes made are of the very slightest, little more, in fact, than the removal of a stop, and the restoration of the word which has given so much trouble to the verse to which it originally belonged.

The translation will be:

*But thou art cast forth as a branch, shamefully dishonoured.*[1]
*The slain, stricken with the sword, go down to the floor of the pit.*
*As a carcase trodden under foot thou shalt not be joined with them in burial;*
*For thou hast destroyed thy land, thou hast slain thy people.*

## Isaiah XVI.

The suggestions made with respect to this obscure chapter may be taken together.

*Verse* 1 describes an actual embassy coming from Moab. Hence read ישלחו (" they send "), and מושלי ארץ (" rulers of the land "). Neither suggestion involves any consonantal change. Translate:

*The rulers of the land send the lamb of tribute from Sela towards the wilderness unto the mountain of the daughter of Zion.*

*Verse* 4.—I read with Kittel " the dispersed of Moab." His other amendments are worthy of consideration.

*Verse* 6.—For בדיו (" his boasters ") read בידיו, *i.e.* " (there is no good) in his hands "; *cf.* also Jer. xlviii. 30, where the same words are followed by the sentence, " They do no good."

*Verse* 7.—" Moab shall howl for Moab "—this is weak both in sense and construction, for the preposition ל is not the usual על (" for "). Hence I suggest מאבל מואב, *i.e.* " Moab shall howl for grief." This would give a very Isaianic play upon words.

*Verse* 11.—With Kittel I drop כי נלאה (" when he wearieth himself ") as a dittograph of כי נראה (" when [Moab] presenteth himself "), but with the argument, which he does not mention, that *resh* and *lamed* are frequently confused. This seems a conflate reading, some ancient MSS. having the one word and some having the other. Hence the duplication.

[1] Or, *clothed with shame.*

ISAIAH XIX. 6, 7.

*The reeds and the flags shall wither. The paper reeds by the Nile, by the brink of the Nile, and all that is sown by the Nile, shall become dry, be driven away, and be no more.*—Lit. trans.

The parallelism is very defective, and the threefold reference to the Nile is clumsy and unnatural. Suspicion falls upon the quite needless words "by the brink of the Nile," since they add no new idea, and are outside the rhythm. The most obvious suggestion would be to drop the words altogether, but this is negatived by the salutary rule that even the most apparently foolish glosses can give some reason for their insertion. It is, therefore, better to suppose some mistake in transmission.

The words "by the brink of" are עַל פְּנֵי, but there is a verb עָלַף ("faint"), used in Ezek. xxxi. 15, of *trees*. Since this word is rare, the scribes naturally read it עַלְפֵי ("by the brink of"), and this led of course to the insertion of the word "Nile."

The passage now reads as follows:

*The reeds and the flags shall wither;*
*The papyrus plants by the Nile shall fail,*
*And all that is sown by the Nile*
*Shall dry up, be driven away, and vanish.*

This improves both sense and rhythm.

ISAIAH XIX. 11.

*How say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings?*—R.V.

The first person must be wrong: it cannot refer to Pharaoh, because he is not the speaker, and it cannot refer to the counsellors, because it is in the singular, and they could hardly speak of themselves as descendants of kings. The emendation proposed is very simple, viz. the insertion of a *beth*, which turn

אני into אבינו (" our father "). But why the omission ? Simply because the syllable בן occurred no less than three times in the latter half of the sentence, and a scribe, *more suo*, omitted one of them.

The translation will be :

*How say ye unto Pharaoh, Our father, son of the wise, son of ancient kings ?*

ISAIAH XX. 4.

> *So shall the king of Assyria lead away the captives of Egypt, and the exiles of Ethiopia, young and old, naked and barefoot, and with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.*—R.V.

The words rendered " to the shame of Egypt " have caused the commentators much perplexity. Kittel suggests that they should be dropped, pointing out that the word " buttocks " (שת) is missing from the LXX. But the LXX reads " the shame of Egypt " (*αἰσχύνην Αἰγύπτου*), so that his inference fails. Nevertheless the omission by the LXX of the word " buttocks " affords the needed clue. Why was the word wanting, but for the simple reason that it was not in the original text ? This reads " uncovered as to their shame," *i.e.* their " pudenda."

How then about Egypt, מצרים ? The word does not mean Egypt at all, and this is the source of all the trouble—it is simply מְצָרִים (" with knives ")! The sentence thus reads " naked and barefoot, and their shame uncovered with knives." Quite probably שת was originally את, the mark of the accusative.

ISAIAH XXII. 16.

> *What doest thou here ? And whom hast thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out here a sepulchre ? Hewing him out a sepulchre on high, graving a habitation for himself in the rock.*—R.V.

The confusion of persons is remarkable, the second person so strangely passing into the third person. Dr.

Kittel has hit upon part of the remedy, viz. that the second part of the verse should be transferred to the end of the previous verse, when it would read :

*Go, get thee unto this treasurer . . . which heweth himself out a sepulchre on high, graving a habitation for himself in the rock.*

This is correct as far as it goes, but what Dr. Kittel has not seen is that the words " and whom hast thou here " are not wanted, and were introduced to bridge over the difficulty of the transition to the third person. When they are removed, the passage becomes self-evident :

*Go, get thee unto this treasurer . . . which heweth himself out a sepulchre on high* (saying), *What doest thou here that thou hast hewed out here a sepulchre ?*

There is, however, another question to be asked, viz. why was the position of the line altered ? Was it due merely to carelessness ? Certainly not, but in order to place the question " What doest thou here ? " nearer to the commission " Go, get thee unto this treasurer." Evidently the scribe did not notice the confusion he had made in the pronouns, which a later scribe saw and tried, ineffectually, to remedy.

ISAIAH XXIII. 10.

*Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish : there is no more strength.*—A.V.

This fine chapter is marred by this impossible verse, which has entirely defied explanation. This need not necessarily mean that any serious alterations have to be made, but that the early scribes failed to solve the difficulty presented by the merely consonantal text.

In dealing with this verse it should be noted that the subject in verses 9, 11, and 12 is " The Lord of Hosts," and therefore also probably the subject of these verses—hence read " He passeth over."

The next phrase is rendered " As a river, Daughter

of Tarshish," but Tarshish was certainly not the mother of Tyre, but on the contrary Tyre was the mother city of Tarshish. Hence the letters בת do not equal "daughter," but belong to the previous letters. The present arrangement is כִּיאר בת. All that is needed is to drop the vowel *yod*, and to change the ת into an ה. We then have כארבה, *i.e.* "as a swarm of locusts." Locusts are frequently used of invaders, *cf.* Judges vi. 5, vii. 12; *cf.* also Jer. xlvi. 23; Nahum iii. 15, 16.

It will be noticed that this immense alteration in meaning is made at the cost of the slightest possible change.

### Isaiah XXIV. 4.

*The lofty people of the earth do languish.*—R.V.

Kittel suggests עִם ("with") in place of עַם ("people"); I would rather suggest that עַם has fallen out, and that the true reading is עם עם הארץ ("with the people of the earth"). "The people of the earth" is used for the common people in Jer. xxxiv. 19. The dropping of a second identical syllable is a frequent scribal error.

### Isaiah XXV. 4, 5.

*For thou hast been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.*

*As the heat in a dry place shalt thou bring down the noise of strangers; as the heat by the shadow of a cloud the song of the terrible ones shall be brought low.*—R.V.

The second of these two verses is strangely confused, and in order to eliminate this confusion both verses must be considered together. The phrase rendered "the noise of strangers," Heb. שׁאון זרים, has been regarded with suspicion by most recent editors, and

various emendations have been proposed, but none of them is at all convincing. The emendation now to be proposed is at the same time simpler and more efficacious.

"Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers as the heat in a dry place" (by the way, the two parts of the sentence should be inverted) is obviously meaningless.

"As the heat in a dry place" should evidently go with the previous verse.

It is now possible to deal with the suspect phrase, "the noise of strangers."

There are two comparisons in this passage: the "terrible ones" are like heat in its oppressiveness, and like a storm in its violence. The word "heat," חרב, occurs three times, but the word "storm," זרם, only occurs twice. But here comes in the strange fact that the consonants of the word זרים ("strangers") are identical with those of the word זרם ("storm"), and there is, therefore, not the smallest doubt that the present pointing is wrong, and that storm and heat should both occur three times. This is the only alteration needed, and the whole passage now assumes its original form, reading קר ("winter") *vice* קיר ("wall"):

*For thou hast been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress.*
*A refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat.*
*When the blast of the terrible ones is as a wintry storm, as heat in summer,*
*Thou shalt quell the tumult of the storm, the heat with the shadow of a cloud:*
*And the song of the terrible ones shall be brought low.*

It will be noticed that both winter and summer are made to express the evil influence of the enemies; they are like the extremes both of heat and cold, and both heat and cold shall yield to the Divine power.

ISAIAH XXVII. 9.

> *By this, therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalk stones that are beaten in sunder.*—A.V.

The word "fruit" must mean, what it evidently cannot mean, the cause of forgiveness. Thus the word is evidently corrupt. Both the sentences beginning with the word "this" evidently refer to the same thing, the cause or condition of forgiveness, and stand in close parallelism. The fact suggests that "all the fruit," of which the consonants are כלפר, should by the transposition of a single letter read לכפר ("for an atonement"), referring back to the same word (rendered *purge*) in the previous half of the sentence. The meaning will then be:

*By this, therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be atoned,*
*And this shall be for an atonement to take away his sin,*
*When he maketh all the stones of the altar as crushed chalk stones.*

In other words, when "he turneth from his idolatry he shall save his soul alive."

ISAIAH XXVIII. 4.

> *The fading flower of his glorious beauty . . . shall be as the first ripe fig before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.*—R.V.

No one seems to have taken exception to the concluding words of this verse, yet they are not merely unpoetical, but they do not give the sense needed by the context of a change in the beauty of Ephraim. The words "while it is yet in his hand," and the stress laid upon "looking," imply that this change was not effected by the person holding the fruit, but took place

while he was holding it, and admiring its beauty. The emendation suggested involves no consonantal change, being merely the addition of a *yod*, and the redivision of the consonants.

Thus instead of יבלענה read יבל עינה, "Its bloom fadeth." The word literally "eye" is used elsewhere for the gleam of metal and jewels, and in Prov. xxiii. 31 of the colour of wine.

ISAIAH XXVIII. 8.

*For all tables are full of vomit* (and) *filthiness*, (so that there is no) *place* (clean).

The added words are surely somewhat excessive, and the "and" in the first half of the sentence is too important a word to be left to be implied. The emendation now to be suggested is mainly important because it will be shortly needed for the revision of several extremely difficult passages later in the book.

The word rendered "so that there is no" is בלי, but this would appear in the MSS. as בל ("not"). There is no better established fact than the frequent confusion between *beth* and *kaph*, hence I read כל ("all" or "every"); this improves the parallelism, since now this word occurs in both members of the sentence; there is now no need to supply "and." The translation will be:

*For all tables are full of vomit,*
*Every place is filthy.*

ISAIAH XXVIII. 18.

*And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with Sheol shall not stand.*—R.V. and R.V. mg.

There seems a general consensus of opinion among Hebraists that the word "cover," which usually implies the covering of sin by atonement, cannot bear the sense

"disannulled." The emendation תפר ("be made ineffective") gives a right sense, but it breaks the rule of graphical resemblance, for there is no likeness between *kaph* and *tau*. There is a constant resemblance and confusion between *kaph* and *samech* (כ and ס), and I should therefore suggest the word ספר ("book" or "writing"), a legal term implying definiteness and publication. The rendering of the line would thus be:

*Your written covenant with death, and your agreement with Sheol shall not stand.*

There is no difficulty about the singular verb, for the same thing is meant in both parts of the sentence.

ISAIAH XXVIII. 25.

*The wheat in rows.*—R.V.

No one seems to have the faintest conception of the real meaning of the word שורה. Of course this is no insuperable objection, for a very technical passage may easily contain unusual words. It has been suggested that it is a dittograph of the word which follows and resembles it, but surely a dittograph should come after rather than before the real word. I would suggest that it is the common confusion of *resh* with *daleth*, and that there has been, consequent upon this confusion, an alteration in the order of the consonants. This would give שדהו ("his field"), which would, therefore, be in parallelism with the last word of the sentence, which is another word for land.

Thus we may render:

*He casts the wheat upon his field, and the barley . . . upon his glebe.*

ISAIAH XXIX. 2.

*Then I will distress Ariel, and there shall be mourning and lamentation, and she shall be unto me as Ariel.*—R.V.

The various explanations given of the words "she shall be unto me as Ariel" all imply that the word

Ariel is not being used as a proper name, as in the previous verse, but as a description of Jerusalem, *i.e.* "lion," or "hearth of God." Had it not been for the fact that in Psalm xxvii. 8 editors have forgotten the possibility of an apparent nominative really being a vocative, it would have been presumptuous to suggest that the same thing has happened here. The letters *lamed* and *kaph*, now rendered "unto me as," should be taken together, and read "to thee."

The sentence will thus be, "And it shall be unto thee, O Ariel," and all difficulty will be removed.

ISAIAH XXIX. 5–8.

5. *But the multitude of thy foes shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones as chaff that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.*

6. *She shall be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake and great noise, with whirlwind and tempest, and the flame of a devouring fire.*

7. *And the multitude of the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her, and her stronghold, and that distress her, shall be as a dream, a vision of the night.*

8. *And it shall be as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty; or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold, he drinketh, but he awaketh and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against Mount Zion.*—A.V. and R.V.

It is beyond question that something is wrong with this passage. The chapter is concerned with judgment on Jerusalem, but this theme is strangely interrupted by verses 5, 7, and 8, though, strangely enough, verse 6 still speaks of judgment. These three verses have been usually regarded as an interpolation.

There are objections to be made against this view. One would have expected that an interpolation should be a single whole, but here the supposed interpolation is in two parts. What is interpolated is usually of inferior quality, but verse 8 is of high literary excellence. What seems yet more decisive is that the dream of plenty, followed by the awakening to destitution, is much better suited to beleagured Israel than to the besieging Assyrians.

Questions regarding authorship have as a rule nothing to do with merely textual criticism, and for this reason I have, with rare exceptions, left them entirely alone. Here, however, the literary question is involved with the determination of the text.

1. The word rendered "thy foes" or "thy strangers" is graphically indistinguishable from "thy proud ones"—*daleth* being read for *resh*.

2. The very clumsy sentence in verse 7, "they that fight against her and her stronghold, and that distress her," is capable, and indeed demands, another translation, for the word rendered "distress her" is wrongly spelt (it should certainly contain an *aleph*) and should mean "her beauty."

What I have now to suggest is that the whole passage deals entirely with Jerusalem, but that two small, and very similar, glosses were added in order to bring in a reference to Assyria.

In verse 7. "The multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel."

In verse 8. "So shall the multitude of all the nations be that fight against Mount Zion."

The similarity of these two sentences is a strong indication that they owe their presence to a single hand.

We can now see how the passage reads in their absence:

*And the multitude of thy proud ones shall be like small dust,*
*And the multitude of the terrible ones, as chaff that passeth away.*

*And it shall be that she shall be visited suddenly and at an instant of the Lord of Hosts*
*With thunder and with earthquake and with a great sound of storm and tempest, and with a flame of consuming fire.*
*And all her beauty, and her ramparts and her pillars shall be as a dream, a vision of the night.*
*And it shall be, as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth ;*
*But he awaketh and his soul is empty :*
*Or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh ;*
*But he awaketh, he is faint, and his soul is craving.*

Here we have a single idea, the destruction of Jerusalem, as portrayed by various images, dust, chaff, an earthquake, a fire, and more vividly still, as the passing of a dream when one awaketh. The clue to this emendation is the likeness of the two inserted sentences.

ISAIAH XXIX. 22.

*Therefore thus saith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob.*—R.V.

As so often, our versions pass by the obvious difficulty. The order of the text is as follows: "Thus saith the Lord unto the house of Jacob who redeemed Abraham." This makes no sense at all, and Dr. Peake suggests that "who redeemed Abraham" is a gloss. The objection is, of course, that there should be some sort of reason, however perverted, for the insertion. A better suggestion would appear to be that Abraham has got into the text by mistake in place of the words ברחם ("with mercy"). The את before Abraham, the mark of the accusative, only needs a *vav* to become אתו ("him"); and would go with the relative.

This change is very slight, as the letter *vav* is so often dropped. The sentence will now read:

*Therefore thus saith the Lord unto the house of Jacob which he redeemed with mercy.*

ISAIAH XXX. 6.

*The burden of the beasts of the South.*—R.V.

*Oracle concerning the beasts of the South.*—R.V. mg.

This is a test passage. Much more radical critics than myself still hold to the traditional reading, regarding it, however, as a scribe's note which afterwards found its way into the text. It does not seem to me that the words are likely to have been so added, and that it is much more likely that a misreading is at the bottom of all the trouble.

My first observation must be that a verb is certainly needed, the verb "they carry" in a later line being too far away. The needed verb is, I hold, concealed under the word משא ("oracle"), which should be משו ("they depart"). I suggest that an early scribe, not understanding the word, and regarding the substitution of one silent letter for another as admissible, turned the word into משא.

The word בהמות ("beasts") obviously stands, as others besides myself have seen, for בחמות ("into the heats"). Thus the passage may be rendered:

*They travel into the parched lands of the South*
*Into the land of trouble and anguish . . .*
*They bear their wealth on the shoulder of asses,*
*Their treasures on the bunches of camels*
*To a people that cannot profit them,* etc.

ISAIAH XXXIII. 18.

*Where is he that counted the towers?*—R.V.

Prof. Peake suggests: "perhaps to estimate the strength needed for an attack, perhaps to see which ought to be destroyed." More important, however, is his candid admission that neither explanation is satisfactory. *Utinam si sic omnes!* The emendation needed is of the slightest, being confined to vocalisation. For סֹגְדִלִים ("towers") read מְגֻדָּלִים, *i.e.* "the men brought up," that is, the men of military age. For the word

*cf.* Psalm cxliv. 12, "That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth." That the LXX read the word thus is evident from their translation, τοὺς τρεφομένους. Our own war memories are the best proof of the accuracy of their rendering.

ISAIAH XXXIII. 21–23.

21. *But there the glorious Lord* (will be) *unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.*

22. *For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our King; he will save us.*

23. *Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not well strengthen their mast, they could not spread the sail: then is the prey of a great spoil divided; the lame take the prey.*—A.V.

There is no need to dwell upon the usual explanation, to wit, that God will save Israel without any effort of their own. It is more pertinent to remark that Dr. Peake says of verse 23: "This hardly suits the context, and may be a gloss." This might be put even more strongly, that it is in direct contradiction to the common explanation, since it implies that the people had a part to play in their deliverance and failed to perform it.

There is one slight emendation for אדיר ("glorious") should be the verb יאדיר ("make glorious").

There is one omission, the word לא ("not") towards the end of verse 21.

There is one other change—the word בל ("not") which occurs three times should in every place be altered into כל ("all"). This confusion is frequent. The result of these infinitesimal changes is to revolutionise the whole passage, and, what is yet more important, to save verse 23 from its threatened exclusion from the text. The translation will be its own best defence:

21. *But there the Lord will enlarge for us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go every galley with oars, and gallant ships shall pass thereby.*

22. *For the Lord is our judge; the Lord is our lawgiver; the Lord is our King; He will save us.*

23. *Thy cables are loosed; all make firm the base of the mast; all spread the flag* (? sail). *Then was the prey of a great spoil divided, the lame take the prey.*

We may now contrast the two versions. There is a broad river suitable for commerce of every kind, but no vessels ride there. Yes, there is one vessel, but its tackle is in confusion, it is dismasted, the crew cannot hoist the sails, or spread the flag. And yet, without any explanation of how it happened, there is a brilliant victory and sufficient spoil to give all a share, even to the cripples who were unable to fight.

In opposition to the above: the broad river carries a fleet both of war and of commerce. All is enthusiasm, cables cast off, masts set up, sails and flags hoisted, the order points to setting to sea. Then comes the speedy return with the lavish spoils of victory.

The only serious alteration to be mentioned is the dropping of לא ("not") its insertion being consequential upon the misreading of כל ("all") as בל ("not"). It should be noticed that the way was prepared for this mistake, since in verse 20 there are two instances of בל and one instance of כל.

ISAIAH XXXIV. 15, 16.

*Yea, there shall the kites be gathered, every one with her mate. Seek ye out of the book of the Lord and read; no one of these shall be missing, none shall want her mate.*—R.V.

The one question which must decide whether this passage can stand is whether Isaiah would have referred

to his own writings as "the book of the Lord." The phrase is certainly exceptional and, as I think, impossible. Is there any sign that anything is wrong? There is one slight indication, viz. that the word "with" is added by both A.V. and R.V., quite without authority or grammatical probability. A verb is certainly needed, and what could be better than the very next word—"seek"?

The words which have been rendered "out of the book" are rendered by the LXX ἀριθμῷ παρῆλθον ("they came in number"), and the same authority makes no reference to the words "of the Lord and read," which is very remarkable, for however inaccurate in difficult passages, the LXX usually pounces upon simple words. Why have they not done so here? The answer is evident, that these words are a gloss added by those who took the word in its ordinary sense of "book." If it be said that there is no authority for this meaning, all that is needed is to suppose the reading מספר, and that the *mem* has been dropped, probably because of its likeness to *samech*, for this word undoubtedly means number.

The passage will then read as follows:

*Yea, there shall the kites be gathered, each one shall seek its mate out of the whole number. Not one of them shall be lacking: none shall miss its mate.*

ISAIAH XXXV. 7.

> *And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.*—A.V.

This verse presents a very interesting problem. Its main difficulty is concerned with the word paraphrased as "where each lay" and supposed to be derived from the root רבץ ("lie down"). Against this is the impossibility of making any accurate translation, which has led recent editors to regard the passage as hopelessly

mutilated, and to put forth drastic suggestions as to what may have been its original form.

The difficulty is complicated by the strange fact that three of the most important words are found in a single verse of the previous chapter (xxxiv. 13). These words are "dragons" (? "jackals"), "habitation," and "court," the last word being here rendered grass, but it should probably bear the same meaning in both passages, even though "court" makes no sense in this verse.

An explanation must be sought for this strange repetition. Some scholars have suggested that the whole of the verse as found in the previous chapter ought to be incorporated, but this suggestion does not take account of the difference of outlook between the two chapters, the earlier describing a scene of desolation, and the later chapter speaking of restoration. Thus, while dragons, or more probably jackals, are in place in chapter xxxiv., they are certainly very much out of place in chapter xxxv., the very next verse to that in which they are now found stating that "no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon." If it be said that what is intended is that jackals have gone, and that reeds and rushes have taken their place, it can only be said that the jackals might very well have stayed in such excellent cover. Hence the conclusion seems inevitable that these three words form an interpolation, and as such must be struck out.

But the question, a very important question, has still to be asked, viz. assuming their interpolation, how was it that they came to be introduced? The answer is this: they were introduced because of the word now rendered "where each lay," but which is literally "a lying down." What lay down? Apparently nothing lay down, so suitable creatures were, quite cleverly, introduced from the previous chapter!

Now that they have gone, it will be seen that the crux of the problem lies in the word רבצה, which must now be examined. What is suggested is the simplest

and most ordinary confusion of letters, viz. that between *resh* and *vav*. Thus for רבצה read ובצה. Now the word בצה (" marsh ") occurs in two passages of the Book of Job. In Job viii. 11 it goes with the word here rendered " rushes," and in Job xl. 21 with the word here rendered " reeds." There can, therefore, be no reasonable doubt that it occurs here also, and that the translation of the whole passage should be as follows :

*And the parched ground shall be a pool,*
*And the thirsty land springs of water,*
*And a marsh with reeds and rushes.*

ISAIAH XXXV. 8.

*And an highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness ; the unclean shall not pass over it ; but it shall be for those ; the wayfaring men, yea fools shall not err therein.* —R.V.

That the revisers were not satisfied is obvious from their marginal notes, which, by the way, give quite impossible renderings. The Hebrew, which is also quite impossible, is as follows : והוא למו הלך דרך, which is, rendered literally, " and he for them wayfaring man ! " There have been several suggestions. For למו Kittel reads לעמו (" for his people "). Prof. Peake endorses this, and translates :

*For his people when it walks in the way, and fools shall not go to and fro in it.*

He remarks that " the E.V. is singularly unfortunate, since it has been commonly taken to mean that the way to heaven is so plain that not even a fool can miss it."

I must admit that I was disappointed at this verdict, having ventured to read my title clear, on the evidence of this very verse ! But we are dealing with a very testing problem of textual criticism and not with private opinions.

At the outset I cannot approve לעמו (" for his

people "), for I cannot see any reason for the dropping out of the ע if it had been originally present. There is, however, no objection to dropping the *vav*, since *vav*, as a silent letter, is constantly omitted. All that is then needed is to redivide the consonants, and to read the lines thus : והואל מהלך דרך.

The word הואל (" perseveres ") occurs in Hosea v. 11, " He persistently walked."

It will be noticed that there, as here, it goes with the verb הלך (" walk "). This strongly confirms the suggestion above made.

The translation will thus be :

*And a highway shall be there, and a way,*
*And it shall be called the way of holiness :*
*The unclean shall not pass over it,*
*But the traveller shall pursue his road,*
*And fools shall not go astray.*

ISAIAH XL. 9.

*O Zion, that bringest good tidings,*
*O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings.*—A.V.

If this be correct, there is no need of any change, and Zion is herself the messenger. Some versions, *e.g.* the LXX and the Targum and some interpreters, take Zion in the objective case, which gives better sense ; but as the participle is in the feminine, and no mention is made of any female evangeliser, this reading has been commonly discarded. The experience already gained suggests that the scribes were careless in regard to the silent letter *aleph*, and that it is very likely that מבשרת (" teller of good tidings "), stands for מבשר את, the את being a particle frequently placed before the accusative. Since, so far as we know, there is no difference in sound between the two readings, it is easy to see how the mistake may have arisen through the passage being often read in the synagogues.

*O thou that bringest good tidings to Zion,*
*O thou that bringest good tidings to Jerusalem.*

This gives a much improved sense.

ISAIAH XL. 19, 20.

19. *The image, a workman melted it, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.*

20. *He that is too impoverished for such an oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to set up an image, that shall not be moved.*—R.V.

ISAIAH XLI. 6, 7.

6. *They helped every one his neighbour, and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage.*

7. *So the workman encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smiteth the anvil, saying it is ready for the soldering; and he fixed it with nails that it should not be moved.* —Lit. trans.

Beyond all question verse 7 of the latter chapter belongs to the earlier chapter. Upon this the critics are agreed. But much more needs to be considered before the results are really satisfactory.

The question demanding an answer is this—what reason was there for this strange transference? This is afforded by the word חזק, which occurs in both places, but means "encouraged" in the one context, and "fixed" in the other context; this provided the attraction which caused the transference.

But this word, as rendered "encouraged," must obviously have already been present in the later passage, or there would have been no reason for the transference of what is now verse 7 from its proper place in the earlier chapter. Thus the critics are wrong in removing verse 6 from its present place. It fits its context very well, and if it goes, the verse which precedes it will probably have to go too. The critics are therefore wrong in transferring verse 6, but, as I hold, quite right as regards verse 7, which must belong to chapter xl. 20.

It will not, however, be sufficient to replace it in its proper context, for it has been altered in order to fit

it for its new position. The word חוק ("fixed") with which it began, having been taken as meaning "encouraged," a personal object or objects had to be added, viz. "the goldsmith" and "the blacksmith," neither of them being at all necessary, as Prof. Wardle has seen, for the simple work of preparing the wooden image of the poor worshipper.

And yet there seemed a good excuse for introducing the blacksmith, because of the presence of the word פעם ("anvil"), for an anvil implies a blacksmith. But strangely enough this word may be translated as the adverb "now," and it was actually so rendered by the LXX, which gives *πότε*.

Hence when this verse goes back, it must go back without the goldsmith and the blacksmith and must read as follows:

*And the workman fixed it, smoothing it with the hammer,*

instead of the present rendering:

*And the workman encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil.*

We may now take a more general view. The retention of xli. 6 in its traditional place is surely right—the passage evidently needs it, and should it have to go the previous verse will, as the critics allow, have to go with it. But what is wrong with this?

XLI. 5, 6.

5. *The isles saw it, and feared: the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near, and came.*
6. *They helped every one his neighbour, and every one said unto his brother, Be of good courage.*

So much for the retention of verse 6; now for the retransference of verse 7, with the glosses removed. I give the whole passage as it will now stand:

XL. 19, 20.

19. *The image, a workman melteth it, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.*

20. *He that is too impoverished for such an oblation chooseth a tree which will not rot: he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to set up an image, and the workman fixeth it, smoothing it with his hammer* (? adze). "*Now*" *he saith,* "*it is ready for the fastening,*" *and he fixeth it with nails, that it be not moved.*

What has been gained by this reconstruction is that we have now two distinct images—the molten image of the rich man adorned with gold, and fixed with silver chains; and the wooden image of the poor man, innocent of all these adornments, roughly hammered into shape, and fastened by nails.

On the other hand, if, as the critics suggest, the two verses of the later chapter are put back as they stand, the poor man's image becomes indistinguishable from the rich man's, being adorned by the goldsmith, which is frankly impossible.

There is a proof positive in favour of my suggestion, which does not seem to have been observed. The words "that it be not moved" occur twice in the traditional text; now they occur but once. This shows that when the transference of the verse was made, these words were wanted in both places! Now that the verse is back in its old place they are only wanted once.

Isaiah XLI. 2.

*Who hath raised up one from the East, whom he calleth in righteousness to his foot?*

or

*Whom righteousness calleth to its foot.*—R.V.

Such renderings as these are absolutely needless, if it be realised that there were no vowels in the early MSS., and that, consequently, if the letters צדק appeared in the MSS. there was nothing to suggest whether they should be pointed as צֶדֶק ("righteousness") or as צַדִּיק ("righteous man"), or perhaps more probably צַדִּיקוֹ ("his righteous man"). Thus there is no need whatever

to suppose that the A.V. is wrong in rendering "a righteous man from the East," which is certainly a simple and more probable reading. As Bishop Hare (1736) remarks in the preface to his edition of the Psalms, "It were much to be desired that this pernicious mass of rules about accents and vowel changes were removed from modern grammars, except such few as are necessary for the reader."

ISAIAH XLI. 27.

*I first will say unto Zion, Behold, behold them; and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings.*—R.V.

The additions made by the translators are highly improbable, and the words "Behold, behold them" are meaningless. The suggestion recorded in Dr. Kittel's text הגדתי ("I have declared") gives good sense, but lacks graphical probability. I should rather suggest הנחמתי ("I have had pity upon"). One can well imagine this as the source of the present reading. This is borne out by the LXX reading παρακαλέσω, a word which constantly translates נחם ("pity").

The translation will be:

*I first will have pity upon Zion, and will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings.*

ISAIAH XLIII. 22–25.

*But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob;*
*Yea, thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.*
*Thou bringest me not the small cattle of thy burnt-offerings,*
*And with thy sacrifices dost thou not honour me.*
(But) *I have not caused thee to serve with offerings,*
*And I have not wearied thee with incense.*
*Thou boughtest me not sweet smelling boughs with silver,*
*And with the fat of thy sacrifices didst thou not satiate me,*

*Ah, it was to make me serve with thy sins ;*
*It was to weary me with thine iniquities.*
*Yet, I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for my own sake,*
*And I will not keep thy sins in remembrance.*

I have ventured to give my own rendering of this important passage in order that it may be more easily compared with the emended rendering to be given later, and that the mind of my readers may be concentrated upon the one change which I am to advocate, and thus be better able to weigh the reasons for or against that emendation.

But what I have first to do is to point out a feature of the text as it now stands which has not, I think, been hitherto appreciated.

In the first place, the view of the importance of material sacrifices as here apparently given is quite unworthy of the great prophet to whom the name of Isaiah has been ascribed. Let a comparison be made between this passage and Isaiah i. 10–18, and the difference of attitude will be manifest. Moreover, it would seem from a reference to verse 14, that the earlier chapter was in the prophet's mind :

*Your appointed feasts my soul hateth :*
*They are a trouble unto me,*
*I am weary to bear them.*

There is also a resemblance too close to be fortuitous between verse 18 of the earlier chapter :

*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord,*

and verse 26 of the present chapter :

*Put me in remembrance ; let us plead together.*

These resemblances make it all the more strange that the view of sacrifice given there should be so different from that given here.

But is the view really different ? If verse 23*b*

stood alone it would be clear that the view of sacrifice was identically the same in both passages :

*I have not caused thee to serve with offerings,*
*And I have not wearied thee with incense.*

But there is a further consideration. The references made to particular sacrifices in the present passage are all capable of a highly depreciatory, and even of a bitterly sarcastic sense.

This must now be shown in detail :

*The small cattle of thy sacrifices . . .*

If the reading be right this is not so depreciatory as it sounds, for the word rendered " small cattle " means sheep or goats—but as elsewhere it is " thy sacrifices," not " my sacrifices."

" Honour me " should better be rendered " burden me."

The line which I have rendered :

*Thou boughtest me not sweet smelling boughs with silver*

seems certainly sarcastic. The play on the words which I have tried to indicate by boughtest and boughs, and the reminder that these offerings were merely a matter of purchase, seems undeniably to suggest a hostile view.

Still more is this so with the next reference to sacrifice :

*With the fat of thy sacrifices didst thou not satiate me.*

The references to fat are obviously sarcastic in 1 Sam. xv. 22, and in Isaiah i. 11, " I am full of the fat of fed beasts." This reference is very significant, since, as shown above, this very chapter seems to have been in the mind of the writer. In Deut. xxxii. 38, it is said of heathen gods : " They did eat the fat of their sacrifices."

Surely this last reference makes it clear that it would have been utterly impossible for " Isaiah " to speak of his exalted Deity as complaining that his worshippers had not satiated Him with the fat of their sacrifices.

Even the word "satiated" is capable of, and indeed requires, a contemptuous sense. It is used elsewhere of anything excessive, *e.g.* intoxication, and I have ventured to render it "drench."

Now it is passing strange that all these references to sacrifices should by a mere chance be capable of, and indeed invite, a contemptuous rendering, if it had not been the original intention of the writer to make use of them in that sense. He knew from Isaiah i. that one of them had been so used in a scathing invective against unspiritual sacrifice. I find it therefore impossible not to conclude that the intention is derogatory of sacrifice.

It is now necessary to pursue another line of argument, drawn from the passage as a whole. It seems to me, after repeated study of it, that it does not hold together. The complaint that sacrifices have not been brought is difficult to reconcile with the couplet:

*I have not caused thee to serve with offerings,*
*And I have not wearied thee with incense,*

though it may, of course, be interpreted that the demands of God for sacrifice had not been excessive. This interpretation gives a sense incredibly weak. It does not explain the contrast inherent in the adverb אך, nor how the withholding of sacrifice could be said to be a weariness to God, whereas the offering of sacrifice might well be this. Last of all, it does not give any ground in reason for the verse which follows:

*I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake,*
*And I will not keep thy sins in remembrance.*

For this reason recent commentators have omitted this verse, though without suggesting any reason for its appearance in the text.

It has now been sufficiently shown by many converging proofs that the passage cannot stand. My suggestion is simple, viz. that the word "not" was

added in verse 23, because it seemed to be required by the previous verse, and that this having been done once with apparent success, three more "nots" were afterwards added.

The passage will now appear as follows:

*But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob;*
*Yea, thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.*
*Thou bringest me the small cattle of thy burnt-offerings,*
*And with thy sacrifices hast thou burdened me.*
(But) *I did not cause thee to serve with offerings,*
*And I did not weary thee with incense.*
*Thou boughtest me sweet smelling boughs with silver,*
*With the fat of thy sacrifices didst thou drench me.*
*Ah, it was to make me serve with thy sins;*
*It was to weary me with thine iniquities.*
(Yet) *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake,*
*And I will not keep thy sins in remembrance.*

The contrast throughout is between the essential service which Israel has withheld and the lesser services which God only regards as a weariness. God has not wearied Israel by imposing upon them an elaborate ritual, but Israel has wearied Him by giving Him what He had not asked, and by withholding what He really desired. It may be objected that this emendation presupposes a wilful alteration of the text in the supposed interests of orthodoxy. This is to think too hardly of the scribes. The insertion of the first "not" removed what must have seemed a serious difficulty. Indeed, the very fact that this insertion, if it be an insertion, has passed so long undetected is some justification of the scribes in their insertion of the first "not," the later insertions of the same word being merely consequential. Now at length the passage stands in its original form, and is perhaps the noblest of all the prophetic assertions of the spirituality of religion. Now at length the concluding verse has its intended force. God does not need sacrifices offered with the

object of conciliating Him, for He is ready to forgive "for His own sake," so soon as the nation is ready to renounce sin.

In spite of the arguments already brought forward, some objection may be made against what is undoubtedly a bold emendation. Thus I have reserved my final argument for my conclusion.

In Jer. vi. 20 we read as follows:

*To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba,*
*And the sweet cane from a far country?*
*Your burnt-offerings are not acceptable,*
*Nor your sacrifices pleasing unto me.*

The four words here used for sacrifices—incense, cane, burnt-offerings, and sacrifices—all occur in this one passage of Isaiah, and cane does not occur in this sense in any other prophet. I submit that this amounts to a proof that "Isaiah" was actually quoting from Jeremiah;[1] and further, that if so, it is impossible to suppose that he could have quoted a passage derogatory to sacrifice, if he was insisting upon the necessity of sacrifice. This seems a conclusive proof that the four "nots" were a later addition to his text.

ISAIAH XLIV. 7.

*Since I appointed the ancient people.*—A.V.

Much learning has been displayed in discussing the name and locality of this mysterious nation. The mystery is solved when the consonants are properly divided. משום עם עלום really stand for מי ישמיע מעלום ("Who foretold from ancient times?").

ISAIAH XLV. 9.

*Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! A potsherd among the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou, or thy work, He hath no hands?*—R.V.

There seems no ascertainable meaning in the words "a potsherd among the potsherds of the earth." What

[1] Or *vice versâ*.

I would suggest is that the word יצר (" pottery ") has fallen out of the first part of the verse, owing to its being supposed to be a dittograph. If this be the case, there would be two similar words in each limb of the sentence —combined in the second half with a play on words between חרשׁ (" potsherd "), and the very similar, though quite distinct, חרשׁ, which means " to work in." Of course, this play on words cannot be retained in English, and we must be content to render as follows :

*Woe to the pottery that striveth with the potter,*
*To the sherd that striveth with him that moulded the earth !*

In the latter part of the verse the *kaph* should not be taken as the possessive of the second person, but pointed as כי (" that ") :

*Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou ? or the work, that he hath no hands ?*

## Isaiah XLV. 15.

*Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.*—R.V.

This is the very opposite from what is demanded by the context, which speaks of heathen nations coming to Israel and declaring, " Surely God is in thee, and there is none else, there is no God." Would such converts speak of the God whom they had just found as " One that hideth Himself " ? Kittel, followed by other editors, alters אתה (" thou ") into אתך (" with thee "), but there seems no reason for the dropping of the *kaph*, if it was originally present, and I do not see that the emendation removes the difficulty. Nevertheless I consider that אתה is the offending word, and that it does not mean " thou " at all, but that it comes from the verb אתה, and means " He cometh." This involves no consonantal alteration whatever. This suggestion

demands the dropping of a *tau* from the word מסתתר, which should be read מִסֵּתֶר (" from his hiding place "), the *tau* having been added by the scribe who made the original mistake of confusing the verb " cometh " with the pronoun " thou."

Strange to say, this very word סתר occurs a few verses later (verse 19), and that verse contains God's denial of secrecy:

*I did not speak in the secret place, in a dark place of the earth.*

If my suggestion be correct, I cannot but feel that the text in its traditional form has had an unhappy effect. In the well-known hymn 555 (A. & M.) this text is placed as the motto verse, but the hymn begins, " Lord enthroned in heavenly splendour." Surely the Blessed Sacrament is not the hiding of God, but His approach from His hiding place. The word " mystery " in the New Testament means something once hidden, but now revealed, an *open* secret.

ISAIAH XLV. 24.

> *Only in the Lord shall* (one) *say unto me, is righteousness and strength: even to him shall* (men) come. —R.V.

The R.V. improperly gives no hint that the words *one*, and *men* have been added in their rendering: and without these words the verse gives no sense, as it stands. I suggest that the original reading was לאדם (" for man "), and that, the *daleth* having been wrongly read as a *resh*, the order of the consonants was altered from אדם to אמר (" he saith ").

This would give a better and stronger sense:

*Only in the Lord shall man find righteousness and strength: to him shall he come.*

A converse mistake is found in Isaiah xlvii. 3, " I will not meet thee as a man. Since the verse following

lacks a verb, Kittel suggests that אדם ("man") stands for אמר ("he saith"). The passage would then read:

*I will take vengeance and will not spare, saith our Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is His name, the holy one of Israel.*

ISAIAH XLVI. 1, 2.

> *Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth. Their idols are upon the beasts, and upon the cattle. The things that ye carried about are made a load, a burden to the weary* (beast). *They stoop, they bow down together: they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.*—R.V.

The contrast between the idols which have to be carried, and the God who bears his people from infancy to old age, has severely suffered in transmission; fortunately, however, the changes needed are of the slightest.

The main mistake is concerned with נשאתיכם ("your things carried about"). The very clumsy passage from the third person ("their idols") to this second person ("your things carried about") ought to have shown that the last syllable כם should go with the word following it, leaving נשאת as the past participle passive ("carried").

The כ means "like," and the מ goes with the next word, making it מעמסת ("burdens"). I am a little doubtful about the phrase "deliver the burden," since in verse 14 ("deliver") is used in its ethical sense, and for משא I am inclined to read נפשים [1] (lit. "souls"), *i.e.* "others."

The improvement in the sense is now manifest:

*Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth; their images are carried upon the beasts and cattle, like loads borne by a weary man. They stoop, they bow down together. They cannot deliver others, but themselves are gone into captivity.*

[1] *Cf.* Ezek. xiii. 20 for the masculine form.

ISAIAH XLVII. 6.

*Upon the aged hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.*—R.V.

It is impossible to prove that this is corrupt, but it seems strange that special mention should be made of the aged, and that there should be no reference to the sufferings of the young. Isaiah lxv. 20 gives rise to the suggestion that the missing word is עול ("infant"). This may well have been dropped as a supposed dittograph of the previous word על ("upon"). Supposed dittographs are a more frequent cause of corruption than real dittographs. Certainly the supposition improves both sense and rhythm:

*Upon infant and aged hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.*

ISAIAH LIII. 9.

*And they made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.*—R.V.

R.V. mg. *because.*

The decision between "although" and "because" offers a strange alternative. If "although," it does not go with the words "with the rich in his death." If, on the other hand, we prefer "because," this will not suit the earlier words, "they made his grave with the wicked." The preposition "in" is obviously not needed. Hence the verse must be regarded as corrupt. Various alterations have been suggested, *e.g.* "his funeral mound" *vice* "in his death," but it is very doubtful whether the word במה ever has this meaning. Another, much better suggestion is "evil doers" עשי רע ("doers of evil"), but this lacks graphical probability, for there seems no reason why the consonant ע should have fallen out. It also seems improbable that "the wicked" and "the evil doers" should be in apposition, the resemblance between them almost amounting to identity.

A single suggestion will remove the difficulty of the preposition "in," and reduce the emendation to a mere matter of the redivision of the consonants: את עשי ריב מתו, *i.e.* "His death with the makers of strife."

The whole passage will thus run as follows:

*And they made his grave with the wicked, and his death with the makers of strife, although he had done no violence, neither was deceit in his mouth.*

ISAIAH LVII. 6.

*Among the smooth* (stones) *of the valley is thy portion; they are thy lot.*—R.V.

Such an important word as *stones* cannot possibly have been left to be added by the reader. The suggestion recorded by Dr. W. L. Wardle, "among the slippery ones of the valley," *i.e.* "the false gods," is equally impossible. What must be noticed is that the word for "smooth" and the word for "portion" are identical in form, though quite unconnected in meaning. What was previously said—that two nouns similar in form tend in process of transmission to become identical—applies here.

For the word חלקי ("smooth things of") I suggest חקרי ("the hidden places of"). The word occurs in Job xxxviii. 16, "The recesses of the deep."

The word is a rare one and all the more likely to be changed for a more common word, especially when, as here, that word was adjacent. There are many instances of confusion between *lamed* and *resh*.

The secrecy of river valleys would be their recommendation as the best place of illegitimate sacrifices.

There is another suggestion possible, which involves no change at all, but a play upon words—"among the possessors of the valley is thy possession"—*i.e.* "among the tutelary gods of the valley is thy portion."

ISAIAH LVII. 8.

> *Thou hast discovered thyself to another than me, and art gone up: thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee a covenant with them; thou lovedst their bed, where thou sawest it. And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes.*—R.V.

The expression rendered "where thou sawest it" has been translated "thou sawest the phallus," literally "thou sawest the hand," but there seems no evidence that the word "hand" ever bore this meaning, and the suggestion seems far-fetched in the extreme. It is far better to suppose the presence of corruption, and to att empt a remedy.

It will be noticed that the first sentence might very well have ended with the word "bed," and that the second sentence, as it stands, begins very abruptly. Acting on this supposition it remains to be seen what can be made of the mysterious words יד חוית, or, dropping the vowels, דחזת.

I would first of all suggest that the *daleth* represents *vav* ("and"), a quite common confusion. This leaves the three letters חזת to be dealt with.

Here I must break a fundamental rule, and venture on guess-work; but there are guesses and guesses. The general sense of the second sentence is the approach to the king, or, more probably, Moloch, of a woman, scented with ointment and perfumes (*cf.* Prov. vii. 17, and the Song of Solomon chapters i. and iv.); in other words, she is described as a harlot.

Then, though in fact this came first to my mind, the letters of the text are, with the exception of the letter *nun*, very like in form to those found in the verb זנה ("play the harlot"). Thus I suggest that we should read ותזנה ("and thou didst play the harlot"), and assume that the נ which stands side by side with the ז has been dropped out, which, graphically speaking, is very probable. So far this is mere conjecture, but there

is one positive piece of evidence, viz. that the LXX, in paraphrasing the passage, perhaps from motives of delicacy, actually reads πορνεία (" harlotry ")!

The second piece of evidence is that the second part of the sentence follows on much better than in the text:

*Thou hast discovered thyself to another than me, and art gone up: thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee a covenant with them: thou lovedst their bed. Thou didst play the harlot, and wentest to the king* (Moloch) *with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes.*

ISAIAH LXIII. 18.

*Thy holy people possessed* (it) *for a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.*—R.V.

Here I agree with previous critics in supposing that the word רשעים (" wicked ") has dropped out, owing to its fortuitous likeness to ירשו עם (" people possess ").

But even so I am not satisfied with the resultant sense, and for ירושו (" possess ") I suggest ידושו (" tread down "). The translation will then be:

*Why do the steps of the wicked trample down thy holy people?*
*Why do our foes tread down thy sanctuary?*

ISAIAH LXIII. 19.

*We are* (thine), *thou never barest rule over them, they were not called by thy name.*—A.V.

The insertion of " thine " is unjustifiable. The rendering of the R.V., " we are become as those over whom thou never barest rule; as they that were not called by thy name," gives a fair sense, but is too far from the Hebrew. There is no " as " in either part of the sentence, and " of old " should certainly go with " we are " and not with " barest rule." The passage is certainly corrupt. In seeking to restore it, it must be remembered that we have only to deal with its consonants. In the word היינו, all that we are concerned with are הנ.

Next we are not bound by the division of the letters into words, and may redistribute, so making הנם (" Behold they are "). But this makes no sense with the word עלום (" ever "). In Ezek. xxxii. 27, " They shall not lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised," the word ערלים (" uncircumcised ") has been rightly emended to עלום (" of old time ") by my friend Dr. McFadyen. Exactly the converse mistake has been committed in the present verse, and what should therefore be read is הנם ערלים (" Lo, they are uncircumcised "). This gives splendid force to this concluding verse of the chapter :

*Lo, they are uncircumcised : thou barest not rule over them. They were not called by thy name.*

ISAIAH LXIV. 5.

*Behold thou art wroth ; for we have sinned : in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.*—A.V.

The R.V. translates, " in them have we been of long time, and shall we be saved ? " It adds, however, the note that " this passage is probably corrupt," which it is a pity that it did not do in many other passages.

The Hebrew is as follows : בהם עולם ונושע. The last word has been variously emended into נפשע (" offended ") and נרשע (" done wickedly "), and the latter is much more probable, as involving less interference with the text (*cf.* Kittel *in loc.*). No likely emendation has been suggested for the first two words. The simplest emendation is to take the *mem* of the first word and join it to the second word. We are left with בה, which is, of course, impossible. It is best to suppose that this originally read בכה (" against thee "), and that the *kaph* was dropped owing to its likeness to *beth*. This will give excellent sense :

*Against thee have we offended from the beginning.*

It should be mentioned that נרשע has the support of the LXX, ἐπλανήθημεν.

ISAIAH LXVI. 17, 18.

> *They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one* (tree) *in the midst, eating swine's flesh and the abomination and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord. For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory.*—A.V.

It is manifest that this passage has fallen into serious confusion. The word absolutely essential to this rendering "know" has to be supplied, and the phrase rendered "it shall come" is quite impossible, nor is the suggested remedy "I shall come" very satisfactory. But the main objection to the verse as it stands is the lack of any proper transition from the condemnation of idolatrous worship in Israel to the extension of true religion to the Gentiles.

I am glad to find, though I had arrived at it independently, that Dr. Kittel suggests the transposition of "their words and their thoughts" to the previous sentence. This is, I think, beyond question. The difficult phrase rendered "behind one" ("the addition 'tree' is absurd") is most easily improved by adding another "one." The phrase would then be אחר אחד אחד ("one after another"), and no wonder that one of three words, all so much alike, was dropped out; it would be almost a miracle if it had not, considering the tendency of the scribes to suppose dittographs. The word rendered "in the midst" should certainly go with "the eaters of swine's flesh."

We now come to the apparently hopeless באה לקבץ, which is rendered (A.V.) "It cometh that I will gather," and in the R.V. "The time cometh that I will gather." These renderings are wholly out of the question, the Hebrew cannot be forced into giving them. Previous critics have suggested באתי, "*I come* to gather."

My own suggestion is almost absurd in its simplicity, viz. that the ל should go with באה, and thus make the

word באחלי ("into my tabernacle") This gives an excellent sense, as will be seen from the following translation of the whole passage :

*They that sanctify and purify themselves one after another in the gardens, in the midst of them that eat swine's flesh, the accursed thing, and the mouse, their works and their devices shall be swept away, saith the Lord. And I will gather unto my tabernacle all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory.*

## CHAPTER XI

### CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE SCIENCE OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM

THE various emendations of apparently corrupt passages in three of the most important books of the Old Testament have now been placed before my readers, and all that remains is to arrive at a just estimate of their probability.

There is no need to dwell upon the particular method adopted, since this has been sufficiently described and defended in the introductory chapter. All that is necessary is to deal with the all-important question of the value of the emendations thus obtained; their relation to emendations antecedent to the employment of this method in its entirety; and their claim to be inserted in the pages of some future revised version of the Old Testament

1. *The Value of the foregoing Emendations.*—It might be supposed that the estimation of this value might now be left, as it will ultimately have to be left, to the judgment of the reader, in the same way that the verdict of "guilty" or "not guilty" must ultimately be left to the jury. Yes, but this does not forbid the employment of an advocate, whose business it is to present his view of the facts in such a way as to assist the jury in arriving at a conclusion. Now when, as in the present treatise, the estimation of the evidence is of peculiar difficulty, the author is naturally the person best qualified to present this evidence in its most intelligible order and sequence; not of course, that he desires to claim any immunity from criticism, but in order that he may state his case to the best advantage.

Now suppose a critic to be desirous of arriving at the value of the present treatise, it is more than probable that he will select a certain number of difficult passages, and that he will base his conclusion upon his opinion in regard to the treatment of these particular passages. But in so doing he will have omitted to include in his calculations a factor of supreme and even decisive importance, viz. that no emendation stands by itself, but that its probability depends in a very great measure upon the number of occasions upon which a similar treatment has proved successful in dealing with other passages, in which similar difficulties are encountered. It is evident that a series of such emendations rests upon a far more solid foundation than can be predicated of any single emendation, however apparently satisfactory, and that a treatise containing emendations arrived at by means of a consistent method, if it is to be estimated at its true value, cannot be tested by taking samples, but that it must be regarded as a whole. Indeed, it would be very beneficial that it should be read twice over, first from the beginning to the end, and then from the end to the beginning; since, unless this is done, the evidence in favour of any particular emendation will vary according to its position in the treatise, and according to the mere chance whether the emendation occurs as the first or the last of a series of similar emendations. Every suggested emendation has, of course, some evidence peculiar to itself, to which special attention is directed in the notes, but over and above this particular evidence, there is the general resemblance to other emendations, which, if it can be shown to exist, greatly increases the index of probability. When an emendation can claim that both kinds of evidence are in its favour, this index rises to a very high level, possibility becomes probability, and probability may even become moral certainty.

Every successful emendation is, of course, valuable as the removal of an error from the traditional text, and as the restoration of the original text, and as such

is of interest to the general reader; but it possesses a special interest for the textual critic, just in so far as it confirms the methods by means of which it was obtained. When such confirmation is frequent, the method adopted is established beyond any possible doubt, since it rests upon the cumulative evidence drawn from a multitude of separate passages. The amateur billiard player often makes very brilliant strokes, but the professional hardly ever seems to need to play a stroke of more than ordinary difficulty. It is very much the same with the science of textual criticism. Success does not depend upon brilliant emendations, but upon the sound judgment which takes account of all the conditions necessary to success. Of two emendations suggested for the same passage, the one may be a startling *tour de force*, only possible for an accomplished Hebraist, the other may be simplicity itself, say the substitution of a single letter elsewhere confounded with the same letter of the Hebrew text. If it were a matter of the comparison of skill with skill, the learned Hebraist's suggestion would naturally be preferred. But it is not this, it is a comparison of method with method, and the simplest method, the method that demands the least interference with the text, is undeniably the better.

Thus it is absolutely essential that in the consideration of the emendations brought forward in the present volume, the method pursued should be regarded as of far greater importance than the individual emendation. So long as the method itself is substantially correct, it does not very much matter if a certain number of suggestions are rejected, or if a certain number of mistakes, which is only too likely, have been committed. There are indeed some passages which are so seriously corrupt that no suggestion can be thought more than tentative. Such suggestions might have been omitted, but to have done this would have given the impression that the facts were not being faced, and thus it seemed best to accept the risk of their rejection.

Any suggestions made with regard to this kind of passage are usually mentioned as being more or less hypothetical. The bulk of emendations put forward is of a less precarious character. It will be usually found that a correct emendation is a certain emendation. When such an emendation has been made, it will, in almost every instance, shine by its own light and be pronounced inevitable. So many conditions have to be satisfied in any given instance, that an emendation which satisfies these conditions is almost bound to be correct. If it gives a sense in harmony with the context; if it involves the slightest possible interference with the transmitted text; if it explains how the early corruption arose—still more if it can claim some measure of external support, its claims are undoubted. How much more will this be the case if it has been arrived at not by reason of any intrinsic probability, but by means of a system applicable to a considerable number of other passages, and is merely an instance of the operation of a general method! If it shows all these characteristics, it can fairly claim serious attention. It has been well said with regard to conjectural emendations. "It is only when they are so exhibited as to invite an extensive and simultaneous criticism, that any true general estimate will be formed of their worth." [1] When this has been done, they invite consideration. They are based upon circumstantial evidence, and as a judge recently remarked, "Circumstantial evidence cannot lie."

2. *Comparison with previous Emendations.*—The history of textual criticism as applied to the Old Testament falls into two strongly contrasted epochs, both almost equally unsatisfactory. Conservative criticism has placed a quite exaggerated value upon the Masoretic text. Reverence for this text as being, as Dr. Pusey actually terms it, "the sacred original," undoubtedly prevented any true textual criticism, and though no one would any longer contend that a text some fifteen

[1] Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. ii. p. 608.

or more centuries distant from the autographs could possibly be termed original, it has taken long to dissipate the prejudice in favour of its readings, even when these readings fail to give any intelligible meaning. The great textual critics who have established the text of the Greek New Testament upon a sound basis were naturally inclined to suppose that their methods could be transferred to the criticism of the Old Testament. They pinned their faith upon the more accurate study of the MSS. Such careful study has been lavished upon the Book of Psalms by Dr. Ginsburg, but the result has been most disappointing. His labour has indeed established a text, but this text is not the original, but a merely mediæval recension.

The Revisers of 1884 entertained a pathetic confidence in the more scientific study of the ancient versions, anticipating that an attempt might be made at " an entire reconstruction of the text on the authority of the versions." They assume that the failure to produce such a text was merely due to the then state of knowledge upon the subject being insufficient; and that with the growth of knowledge, it was to be anticipated that the faulty condition of the text might be remedied. Subsequent research has by no means tended to confirm this optimistic view; and while no one would deny that the evidence of the versions is of great value in confirming a suggested emendation, it has been increasingly felt that they are quite incapable of being made the ground-work of textual reconstruction; indeed, this text is often greatly inferior to the recension made a thousand years later.

The conservative critics seem always to be hoping against hope that the closer study of the evidence might somehow give better results, or that some much earlier MS. might be discovered which would throw new light upon the problem. Thus they were satisfied merely to mark time. All that they ventured to do was to make a revised version from an unrevised text, as though the only thing at fault was the translation.

That they have improved the translation is beyond a doubt, but it may be questioned whether they have not really delayed textual reconstruction, by allowing it to be supposed that the traditional text was sufficiently accurate to form the basis of a new version. They have given a superficial appearance of certainty which vanishes upon a closer study. In numberless passages they have forced the text to yield meanings of which it was quite incapable. Their revised version is, indeed, urgently in need of revision, at least in regard to these passages.

The fault of more recent writers has been the very opposite. They have been all too ready to presume the presence of widespread corruption, and have taken quite unjustifiable liberties of correction. The habit of emendation grows by what it feeds on, and critics, emboldened by the example of other critics, have thrown caution to the winds, and beginning with revising, have ended by rewriting the text, in defiance of all canons of probability. This statement may appear startling as coming from a pen which has been responsible for several hundred emendations, most of them previously unsuspected.

The answer to this very natural objection is of crucial importance. It is the purpose of this treatise to establish the contention that there is such a thing as science of textual criticism, and that only those emendations which are in harmony with the principles of this science deserve acceptance. The first business of a critic is not to make emendations, but to discover the principles on which emendations ought to be made. It is not contended that all previous emendations are wrong, for many of them are undoubtedly deserving of recognition; but the good are so constantly accompanied by others of no value at all, that they have shared a common rejection. What is needed is a science of selection.

Hitherto there has been no attempt made to distinguish the admissible from the inadmissible, and it

has seemed sufficient to the commentators to record particular emendations, specifying the names of their authors, but withholding the reasons for or against their adoption. Now no emendation is of any value at all apart from these reasons, and it is the province of textual criticism to test their validity. It need not be the case that the author of any emendation was himself aware of the conditions which have to be satisfied before it can be accepted, but it is absolutely necessary that these conditions should have been, consciously or unconsciously, complied with before any suggestion can be approved. Graphical resemblance between the emendation and the text as it stands is not an added recommendation; it is a *sine qua non* for the acceptance of any and every emendation. And this graphical resemblance must not be asserted at haphazard; it must be the resemblance between letters which are habitually confounded. This will in some measure enlarge the scope of emendation by revealing the fact that a likeness may exist between letters between which it has not been previously observed. The single discovery of the likeness between *mem* and *pe* has given birth to a whole family of emendations, and that between *samech* and *kaph* has led to the solution of some very perplexing problems. The acquaintance gradually gained with the errors of copyists, and with the licence allowed themselves by scribes in rectifying what they supposed to have been the mistakes of copyists, opens up another fruitful field which has yielded an ample crop of striking emendations.

The benefit of a scientific method in enlarging the scope of emendation, is accompanied by an almost equal benefit in the exclusion of a whole mass of emendations which cannot be held to satisfy its somewhat drastic conditions. Nothing has so militated against the employment of conjectural emendation as the unrestricted licence claimed by critics to alter anything into anything else. When, for example, Dr. Cheyne makes no less than ten alterations in a single passage

containing fourteen words (*cf. Message of Hosea*, p. 116), though all that is at fault is remedied by taking a supposed adjective as a proper noun, on the authority of the LXX, it can hardly be wondered at that conjectural emendation has been derided by serious scholarship. Thus both positively and negatively the promulgation of a reasoned method of criticism is essential to the reconstruction of the text.

3. *The Inclusion of Emendations in a Revised Text.*— Hitherto no emendation arrived at by means of conjecture has ever found a place in any English translation, and one must be prepared to defend this proposal against an opposition which, however mistaken, it would be unkind to attribute to prejudice. The first argument to be presented to the reader is that a conjectural element is already present in the very text from which all our translations have been made, for the Masoretes have set the example of inclusion by distinguishing between what was found in the MSS. and was termed "written," and what, though not so found, was actually "read." There is no need to form any critical estimate of the value of these readings, many of them no doubt resting on very insufficient grounds, but their presence proves conclusively that the earliest editors were of opinion that the text could not rest solely upon the evidence of the MSS. A principle admitted by the Masoretes must not be disallowed in dealing with their text. It is quite absurd to contend that conjectural emendation can be excluded in dealing with a text which avowedly included a conjectural element. The Masoretes were evidently convinced that it was necessary to apply the best resources of scholarship in correcting the errors due to transmission. What was obligatory then is surely not inadmissible now.

The second argument is that though the editors of the New Testament have not found it necessary to include any emendations which do not possess some measure of external support, they freely employ all the resources of criticism "in deciding between the

rival claims of various readings which might properly affect translation." They reserve to themselves the right of weighing the evidence, and do not consider themselves as of necessity bound to follow the reading which has the greatest numerical support. All this clearly proves that the determination of the text of the New Testament could not be carried out without the exercise of private judgment. A still wider liberty must necessarily be demanded in the criticism of the text of the Old Testament, resting as it does upon a single recension, for which it is impossible to claim more than a very doubtful competence. To accept the scholarship of the ninth century, and to reject the scholarship of the twentieth century, is in effect to prefer the judg ment of children to the wisdom of age. It is indeed true that the evidence for any particular emendation is by no means of the same value as that available for the criticism of the text of the New Testament; but on the other hand, the text itself has by no means the same authority, the MSS. being so much more recent, and the versions so obviously inferior in literary skill.

Let it therefore be granted that the inclusion of a conjectural element is absolutely necessary in any attempt made to revise the Old Testament text, and that everything depends upon the way in which this liberty is exercised. Now supposing that the method adopted in the present volume has been made out without any reasonable measure of doubt, the emendations thereby obtained possess a substantial claim to be included in any future edition of the Bible.

The admission of this claim should exert a twofold effect upon Biblical Criticism. It would, in the first place, clear the ground by sweeping away the mass of emendations which crowds the pages of recent commentaries, and diverts attention from the first-hand study of the text. Scholarship is crushed by its own weight, and must be liberated from the tyranny of its past. At present it is obligatory to study the suggestions of innumerable editors, cryptically referred to by means

of the most prominent letters of their usually unpronounceable names, no mention being made as to the grounds upon which any emendation may be presumed to rest, and no indication given in order to guide the student in the process of selection. The text of the Old Testament cannot be reached by the bare enumeration of the names of all the critics, the measure of their disagreement being the proof of the impossibility of arriving at finality in this way. Only one emendation of a passage can possibly be right, and all the rest must be wrong.

The next benefit will be the encouragement of sober criticism. If textual criticism is ever to become a serious study, it must be allowed to insert its best accredited results in the pages of a new revised version. It will then work under a due sense of its responsibility to the Church at large. Nothing will be brought forward that cannot claim a *prima facie* right of inclusion. As things now stand, not a particle of all the labour of the critics has been utilised to improve the text as studied by the ordinary reader, or as read in our places of worship.

In the meantime the Book is being broadcasted over the world, and translated into well-nigh every known language of mankind ; and all this is being done from a text very inadequately revised some twelve hundred years ago. This is a very grave responsibility both for the critics and for the Church. Either the critics have failed to do their proper work, or the Church has failed to appreciate their labours. The text of the Classical Authors has been subjected to the severest scrutiny, and no one can doubt that it is now much nearer to the autographs than it was prior to revision. The text of the New Testament has been similarly handled, vastly, as all allow, to its improvement. The Old Testament alone remains in its unrevision. This state of things is intolerable.

It may, of course, be that the problem of revision is beyond solution. If this be the case, it is high time

that this fact was acknowledged in our translations, and that future versions should mark very many passages as hopelessly corrupt, rather than continue to exhibit translations of these passages—translations of which the Hebrew text is quite incapable.

It does not seem to have been observed that there is a world of difference between a reading demonstrably wrong, since it can only be rendered by an impossible translation, and a probable conjecture, which may reasonably claim to have been what was originally written. To include the former, and to exclude the latter, is to prefer an impossibility to a possibility. When a reading found in the traditional text has no discernible sense, and still more when it is obviously meaningless, and sometimes even revolting, and when it may be shown to have arisen from an error which has produced similar results in many other passages; but when, on the other hand, an emendation exhibits beauty and cogency, and was obtained by methods of rectification successfully adopted in many other passages, to prefer the written nonsense to the conjectured sense, merely on the ground that the one happens to be found in a late recension of no very high character, while the other is the product of the best modern scholarship, working under vastly improved conditions, may indeed be termed conservatism, but is in fact the conservation of error.

An attempt has been made in the volume now concluded to submit to the judgment of the Church a method of emendation based on an exhaustive study of the conditions of transmission, together with a large number of emendations obtained by this method, and illustrating its operation in particular cases. It is contended that the method justifies the emendations, and that the emendations justify the method. Of these two, the method is more important than the actual emendations, for if it be substantially correct, the problem of reconstruction is no longer insoluble.

The labour is indeed exacting, and but a small part

of what needs to be done can be achieved by any single individual. For this reason I have endeavoured to put on record not merely my own emendations, but every method and expedient made use of in the various critical processes employed. I can only end with the familiar words of Mr. Ready-to-halt of whom Bunyan records: "Because he had nothing to bequeathe to them that should survive him, but his crutches, and his good wishes, therefore thus he said 'My crutches I bequeathe to my son that shall tread in my steps, with a hundred warm wishes that he may prove better than I have been.'"

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